

Contract

UNL - Grape and Winery Forum - #18-01-199 - \$6,000/#18-13-189 - \$14,000

Contact

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Issue of Interest

The Grape and Wine Forum is needed by Nebraska grape growers and winery personnel to improve their growing techniques and winery technologies, in order to produce wines of world-class quality.

Approach to Problem

The 13th Annual Nebraska Winery and Grape Growers Forum and Trade Show have adopted the theme, "Nebraska Wines of Highest Quality: Grower and Winery Practices that Make Them a Reality". Nationally renowned speakers have been engaged to conduct workshops, make presentations, and interact with growers and winery personnel in "round-table" sessions in order to provide educational opportunities that will lead to enhanced quality of Nebraska wines.

Goals/Achievement of Goals

The 13th Annual Nebraska Winery and Grape Growers Forum took place in Kearney, Nebraska, from March 4-6, 2010, to accomplish the goal of improving growing techniques and winery technologies in order to produce wines of world-class quality. Over 250 people attended to be educated on subjects such as avoiding wine flaws, canopy management, vine balance, tasting room management, and marketing and promotion of Nebraska's wine grapes. An extensive evaluation process took place and results of the evaluation forms will be summarized at the next meeting of the Planning Committee tentatively scheduled for July 24, 2010. The comments of the people submitting evaluation forms were extremely positive.

Results, Conclusions, Lessons Learned

This educational programming enabled attendees to gain valuable information in their grape and winery enterprises. These results are underscored by the highly positive comments received on the evaluations submitted by the attendees. Timothy Martinson, Professor of Viticulture from Cornell University; Stephen Menke, Colorado State University Enologist; Donniella Winchell, the Ohio Grape and Wine Association; and Lisa Smiley all assisted with the proposed round table discussions. As noted previously, the overall opinion of the attendees was very affirming that the educational process was worthwhile. This grant helped pay the costs of the services provided by the host venue.

The 13th Annual Nebraska Winery and Grape Growers Forum and Trade Show took place March 4-6, 2010, at the Kearney Holiday Inn and was enthusiastically received by those attending. A few quotes underscore the success of this educational program: "Selling/Buying Grapes BEST Session;" "Steve Menke on Blending – great session;" "Tasting nights were a terrific way to meet all wineries! ;" "WOW—this was the best banquet ever! ;" "Donniella Winchell was great, just the type of person needed by the NWGGA." Furthermore, the evaluations were overwhelmingly favorable, with over 90% indicating that information gained at this conference will help them make sound decisions about their enterprise. Tim Martinson's Vine Balance discussions were very effective, with several participants indicating that they really liked the workbooks and working in groups. Steve Menke's focus on Winemaking Challenges

was highly regarded and attendees especially appreciated Steve's blending sessions, noting how much they liked the hands-on approach he brought to the audience. Donniella Winchell was "a breath of fresh air" and more than one attendee noted Donniella's enthusiasm was infectious, yet her presentations were full of take-home messages and useful information. Other speakers also received high marks, including Seth McFarland, Mac's Creek Vineyards, Issam Qrunfleh's (UNL PhD viticulture student) discussion of bud-break delay and Lisa Smiley who shared ideas for improving customer service skills in the tasting room. Most survey respondents rated the round table discussions highly and indicated a desire to continue, including them as part of the program. In addition, a number of positive suggestions were provided in the conference evaluations and will be taken into consideration as more than 90% of evaluators indicated that they were "satisfied" or "very satisfied" with this year's conference. One respondent said "Bravo Planning Committee – your hard work pays off! We can hardly wait for 2011!"

Progress According to Outcome Measures

Anticipated long-term value of this program is expected to be significant. The topics being addressed by the speakers and participants have been selected to reflect needs expressed by Nebraska's grape growers and wineries. Ultimately, the result should be improved wines that attract an ever-growing tourist population and stimulate local economies in Nebraska's towns and rural areas.