

Contract

UNL Viticulture - Educational Seminars - #18-01-201 - \$12,000

Contact

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Issue of Interest

The overall goal of the Viticulture Program is to provide science-based research information that will assist the development of the Nebraska grape and wine industry in a sustainable and profitable manner. This is done to enhance the economic viability of Nebraska communities. This project assisted the Viticulture Program's professor and technologist to attend professional improvement conferences which were specifically related to the viticulture industry. It was proposed that attendance at these functions would increase the knowledge of nationwide and regional trends in the wine industry and how they relate to Nebraska.

Approach to Problem

The Nebraska Grape and Winery Board approved \$12,000 from the Winery and Grape Producer's Promotional Fund to assist in paying for travel, fuel, and vehicle rental costs. These funds also allowed for conference expenses associated with the Viticulture Program's professor and technologist's attendance at professional improvement conferences. The conferences were specifically related to the viticulture industry. The conferences attended included the SCRI workshop organized by Tim Martinson, Cornell University Viticulture Specialist, which took place from February 10-11, 2010. This was followed by The Cold Climate Grape and Wine Conference held from February 12-14, 2010, in Minneapolis, Minnesota. The SCRI workshop involved growers and university professionals from cold climate states ranging from Vermont to the Dakotas. Attendance at the American Society for Horticultural Science meeting in St. Louis, Missouri, from July 25-28 and the Plant Growth Regulation Society of America in Asheville, North Carolina, from August 2-5, 2009, also took place.

Goals/Achievement of Goals

Given the overarching goal of the Viticulture Program, further knowledge has been accumulated of regional and nationwide practices in the wine industry. In turn, this will allow UNVP personnel to apply the lessons learned to increase the sustainability of the wine industry in Nebraska.

Results, Conclusions, Lessons Learned

The results of the UNVP educational programs are many. Evaluations at the end of these educational programs have been exceedingly positive, with participants indicating that they will apply what they have learned to improving their grape growing practices.

Progress According to Outcome Measures

Changes that have been implemented include reduced pesticide use, application of organic principles to practical plant protection problems, changing over from trellis systems that are less efficient in light interception to those that enhance light interception, resulting in greater efficiency and higher yields. The UNVP Vineyard Technologist has become more proficient in vineyard management, and they have applied much of what they have learned to improve the physical structures in the UNVP research vineyards.

Long-term benefits that have resulted include the development of better management practices (BMP) in commercial vineyards in Nebraska. Although the obvious benefits include better quality grapes and greater recognition for Nebraska's wines, additional benefits are being accrued. They include a reduced negative impact on the environment, a more welcoming environment for tourists, and a positive impact on the economies of Nebraska's towns and rural areas.