

Contract Number 18-13-109
NWGGA – Grower Field Days

Grant Amount
\$2,500

Contact Information

Nebraska Winery & Grape Growers Association

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Issue of Interest

A survey of Nebraska grape growers was conducted in 2009 and again in the spring 2010 to find out what educational topics were important to them. Based on the results of those surveys, three themes emerged: canopy management, pesticide management, and vine nutrition. The Growers Council had been inactive for about two years prior to March 2010 because the Council itself had become inactive.

Approach to Problem

Once the major themes were identified, the newly appointed Growers Council Co-Chairs began to plan educational seminars/field days to cover the topics. It was decided to hold three events in different locations in Nebraska to accommodate growers from various parts of the state. One event was held in Ravenna on May 12th and two were held simultaneously on June 12th in Lewellen and Lincoln. The dates were chosen because the information was timely and could be applied immediately to the vineyard. Selecting three locations across the state made it available to more growers. Each of the sessions ended with a discussion of the VINEBALANCE self-assessment to reinforce the importance of the program to Nebraska grape growers and encourage them to participate in the NWGGA initiative.

Goals/Achievement of Goals

The Growers Council researched canopy management, pesticide management, and vine nutrition, and consulted with various growers to define speakers who were knowledgeable on the topics and would provide new perspectives. Once the speakers were identified they were contacted and asked to present an educational seminar/field day in their area of expertise. We also contacted various wineries to see if they would host the events. Wineries were honored when asked to host the field days and it gave the Nebraska grape growers a chance to visit vineyards and have hands-on

experiences. Following are the paragraphs that were used to describe each of the events:

Central Nebraska Field Day – May 22

Location: Cedar Hills Vineyard, 48970 375th Road, Ravenna, Nebraska
Joyce and Paul Sears, Hosts
Presenter: Vaughn Hammond, Extension Technologist, University of Nebraska, Kimmel Education and Research Center
Topic: Disease, Insect, and Weed Spraying Program – 2010 Midwest Commercial Small Fruit and Grape Spray Guide
Time: 9:00 – early afternoon

Objective: To gain a better understanding of the 2010 Midwest Commercial Small Fruit and Grape Spray Guide. How the guide can be effectively used in making management decisions concerning vineyard disease, insect and weed issues. Pesticide application safety topics will also be covered to increase the producer's awareness on topics surrounding pesticide handling and application. An overview covering sprayer calibration will also be presented.

Eastern Nebraska Field Day – June 12

Location: Deer Springs Winery, 162nd and Adams St., Lincoln, Nebraska
Jennifer and Jon Reeder, Hosts
Presenters: Michael White, Iowa State University Extension Viticulture Specialist
Vaughn Hammond, Extension Technologist, University of Nebraska, Kimmel Education and Research Center
Topic: Canopy Management and Crop Estimation
Time: 9:00 – early afternoon

Objective: Learn about canopy management through the season and how it is determined by interaction of the cultivar, vineyard site, seasonal climate, inputs and the trellis system. Participants will learn when and what canopy management procedures should be considered through the season. Mike and Vaughn will also briefly review the steps in taking a preliminary June yield estimate that could be used to adjust crop load if needed and/or inform potential buyers of the potential yield.

Western Nebraska Field Day – June 12

Location: 17 Ranch Winery, 304 Main St., Lewellen, Nebraska
Ellen and Bruce Burdick, Hosts
Presenter: Steve Gamet, Viticulture Technologist, University of Nebraska-Lincoln
Topic: Sustainable Canopy and Crop Management for Western Nebraska and Eastern Colorado throughout the Season.
Time: 9:00 – early afternoon

Objective: Stephen Gamet, University of Nebraska Viticulture Technologist and Vineyard/Winery owner in Western Nebraska, will present a workshop on *Sustainable Canopy and Crop Management for Western Nebraska and Eastern Colorado throughout the Season*. List of topics will include shoot thinning and positioning, leaf removal, crop load, crop thinning and crop estimation (mid-season) for potential yield. How site, climate and cultural practices can or will affect them. Time management and cost estimations will also be examined for different trellis systems and how different cultivars on these systems could be affected. We will cover these topics classroom style in the morning and then have hands on experience in the field in the afternoon.

The field days were advertised to all NWGGA members by email; each field day was on the NWGGA website's Calendar of Events; and Dr. Paul Read included them in his newsletter, *VineLines*. We also know that Michael White included our events in his Iowa State University *Wine-Grower-News* email newsletter.

Results, Conclusions, Lessons Learned

A total of 60 growers attended the three field days. According to the evaluations and comments we received, growers were very thankful to hear a different perspective and have hands-on experience in the vineyard. Growers also appreciated going through the VINEBALANCE self-assessment at the end of the field day and the informal, lively discussions that always followed.

Eastern Nebraska attracted the most growers because of the high concentration of vineyards located there. Western Nebraska was sparsely attended. Nonetheless, we felt it was important to cover the state as best we could and bring field days to the growers.

It appears that Nebraska grape growers have begun the self-assessment process in their vineyards, based upon the comments we have received regarding the VINEBALANCE program. We held three educational seminars/field days in May and June funded by this grant and we have always ended the seminars covering the appropriate chapters from the VINEBALANCE self-assessment workbook. We are at the beginning of the educational process and have taken the first step by reaching out and listening to the Nebraska grape growers and providing three educational seminars/field days.

NWGGA has learned that future events need to be 3-4 weeks in advance of the scheduled timing of specific viticultural practices so growers can be prepared and have a timeline of what needs to be done and when. We have heard that growers want a VINEBALANCE timeline to follow. We are working with one of our presenters to develop a Nebraska specific timeline to be presented at the 2011 UNL Viticulture Conference. We are hopeful this will happen.

Regarding budgeting for educational seminars/field days: We have learned the following:

- a) Presenters need to be paid a higher honorarium. We randomly chose the amounts for this year because we had nothing to base these fees on. We now know that presenters need to prepare for a field day much like a conference presenter does. They typically give up a Saturday to present, plus travel time. Future budgets will include an increase for their fees (more likely \$250-\$350).
- b) Wineries that host the events need to be paid more for using their facility. No one objected to us, but one winery charged us \$225. We were thankful that another facility did not charge us for the use of their facility due to low attendance. The facility fee covers use of the facility, setting up (tables, chairs) and clean up afterwards. We feel that \$200 would be a fair fee to be paid for use of the facility.

- c) We will include meal costs within our budget. We did not build that into our budget because we have not done this before and simply did not know. All of the field days went into the afternoon (none of them ended prior to 2:30). If we build in the meal costs it will lend itself much better to the continuity of the program and cut down on the cost to attendees. We feel that \$20 per person for rolls and coffee in the morning, coffee available for the remainder of the morning, and lunch would be appropriate. Most of our hosts had the food catered.

Progress Achieved According to Outcome Measures

Once we introduced the VINEBALANCE Program to Nebraska grape growers, 25% of growers purchased the books. We have held four educational seminars/field days (May, June, and July – another grant) and always ended the sessions discussing in detail the appropriate chapters from the workbook. This reinforces the VINEBALANCE program immediately and allows the growers to find out where they are in the self-assessment scale. The Growers Council of the NWGGA will continue to plan future seminars and field days that will focus on VINEBALANCE practices. Our hope is that in the next two to three years, 75% of all growers in the state will be using the VINEBALANCE Grower Self-Assessment Workbook to determine if any modifications need to be made in their vineyard. By comparing current production practices with examples provided during the seminars, growers will be able to both assess and discover ways to improve their sustainability. NWGGA and the Growers Council will continue to impress the importance of the VINEBALANCE program at every opportunity including seminars, field days, and conferences that are sponsored by other entities. We also feel it is important that the wineries help in this effort because they are immediate beneficiaries of the quality grapes being produced and ultimately the final product – wine – should also be of higher quality.

Financial Report

| <u>Field Day 1 - May 22nd - Cedar Hills Vineyard</u> Ravenna, Nebraska | Grant Budget | Actual Costs | Comments |
|---|---------------------|---------------------|-----------------|
| Facility Fee | \$100.00 | \$100.00 | |
| Speaker Fee, Vaughn Hammond | \$125.00 | \$125.00 | |
| Mileage - 360 miles roundtrip @ \$0.50/mile | \$180.00 | \$177.50 | |
| One night lodging | \$100.00 | \$79.14 | |
| Meals | \$50.00 | \$50.00 | |
| Handouts | \$35.00 | \$68.35 | |
| 2010 Midwest Commercial Small Fruit and Grape Spray Guide (40 copies @ \$5.00 each) | \$200.00 | \$200.00 | |
| | \$790.00 | \$799.99 | |

| <u>Field Day 2 - June 12th - Deer Springs Winery</u> | Grant Budget | Amount pd | |
|--|-----------------|------------|-----------------------|
| Lincoln, Nebraska | | | |
| Facility Fee | \$100.00 | \$225.00 | |
| Speaker Fee, Michael White | \$250.00 | \$350.00 | |
| Speaker Fee, Vaughn Hammond | \$100.00 | \$100.00 | |
| Mileage - 420 miles roundtrip @ \$0.50/mile Michael White from Indianola, Iowa | \$210.00 | \$210.00 | |
| Mileage - 100 miles roundtrip @ \$0.50/mile Vaughn Hammond from Nebraska City, NE | \$50.00 | \$50.00 | |
| One night lodging - Michael White | \$100.00 | \$ 0.00 | stayed w/relatives |
| Meals - Michael White | \$50.00 | \$49.00 | |
| Handouts/supplies - Michael White | \$100.00 | \$41.00 | |
| Handouts - Vaughn Hammond | | \$9.00 | |
| Badges (part of supplies) to Cathy Oslzly | | \$42.79 | |
| | \$960.00 | \$1,076.79 | |

| <u>Field Day 3 - June 12th - 17 Ranch Winery</u> | Grant Budget | Amount pd | |
|---|-----------------|-----------|-----------------------|
| Lewellen, Nebraska | | | |
| Facility Fee | \$100.00 | \$ 0.00 | |
| Speaker Fee, Steven Gamet | \$125.00 | \$125.00 | |
| Mileage - 650 miles roundtrip @ \$0.50/mile | \$325.00 | \$325.00 | |
| One night lodging | \$100.00 | \$ 0.00 | stayed w/relatives |
| Meals | \$50.00 | \$50.00 | |
| Handouts/supplies | \$50.00 | \$0.00 | No bill received |
| | \$750.00 | \$500.00 | |

| Field Days | Grant Budget | Actual Costs |
|--|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| Field Day 1 - May 22nd - Cedar Hills Vineyard | \$790.00 | \$799.99 |
| Field Day 2 - June 12th - Deer Springs Winery | \$960.00 | \$1,076.79 |
| Field Day 3 - June 12th - 17 Ranch Winery | \$750.00 | \$500.00 |
| | \$2,500.00 | \$2,376.78 |