

FINGER LAKES VINEYARD NOTES



Newsletter 11

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Cornell Cooperative Extension

Finger Lakes Grape Program

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CURRENT SITUATION

Tim Martinson

Now that harvest is finally over, it's time to look ahead to the 2004 crop year. This, of course, has been one of the most difficult seasons in memory, and estimates from Western NY are that as many as 60,000 T of Concorde were not harvested because of the combination of a heavy crop and poor ripening conditions.

Catawbas. In the Finger Lakes, while some blocks failed to make brix standards, markets for traditional varieties were as big a concern for many. Notably, there was a lot of Catawba hanging right through the end of the season due to the large crop, and markets for Catawba will shrink in 2004 as major processors reassess their needs and contracts. With 1,180 acres of Catawba and 75% of the statewide crop, this will have a big impact on the Finger Lakes in 2004. If you have Catawba, it's time to carefully consider your prospects of selling it in 2004, and seriously consider removal if the prospects look dim. While non-traditional Catawba-based wines (e.g. 'Red Cat') have been very successful for small wineries, winery needs are in the 100s of tons, not in the several thousand-ton range

of major processors. Don't expect a turnaround in the near future.

Bud Fruitfulness. In years like this, with a heavy crop that hangs for a long time, it's reasonable to assume that bud fruitfulness will be down sharply in 2004, as it was in 1993 following the dismal 1992 growing season. However, we also had a patch of warm, sunny weather at bloom this year, which tends to favor higher bud fruitfulness. This may reduce the 'crop' effect on fruitfulness.

Winter Hardiness. Visually, many growers are finding good quantities of apparently 'ripe', dormant canes (good periderm formation) –unlike many years with an early frost and heavy crop. Those lucky enough to escape the early October frost didn't see further heavy frosts until the end of the month or even November. For natives, this suggests that most growers can expect the normal range of winter hardiness. For more cold-tender hybrid and *V. vinifera* blocks, I think the jury is still out. The late harvest (especially with late-ripening reds such as Cabernet Franc, Cabernet Sauvignon, and Merlot) may have had more of an impact on the ability of these vines to attain cold-hardiness. Bottom line: Prune these varieties late, and carefully examine bud mortality.

Crown Gall. Following last winter's winter injury, we have seen significant amounts of crown gall appearing this past summer. Be especially alert for trunks with crown gall this winter, and replace as needed. Winter-injured trunks often limp along for another season, but rarely recover in the second year following injury.

Winter Meetings. As the calendar of events in this newsletter shows, the number of options for continuing education for the grape industry is expanding! I thank my colleague Mark Chien, Pennsylvania State University Cooperative Extension, for compiling a regional calendar each year, from which I lifted many of these events. We hope you will take the opportunity to attend those that interest you. Of special interest to area growers, the 55th **Annual Finger Lakes Grape Growers Convention and Trade Show** will again be held at the Waterloo Holiday Inn on Saturday, February 28. Look for a complete program and registration form in January's *Vineyard Notes*. The **New York Wine Industry Workshop**,

organized by Thomas Henick-Kling, will take place in Geneva on 1-2 April.

Finally, I would like to wish you and your family a very special holiday season. I appreciate your support and patience while I was on family leave. Happy Holidays!

DID MECHANICAL THINNING WORK? – RESULTS FROM LAKE ERIE GROWER TRIALS.

Hans Walter-Peterson and Terry Bates

[Ed. Note – This article originally appeared in the Lake Erie Regional Grape Program Crop Update, December 4, 2003, and was reprinted by permission – TEM]

In the midst of this difficult season, several growers in the Lake Erie region were kind enough to offer portions of their vineyards for some fruit thinning trials conducted by Terry Bates and Rick Dunst. Terry recently finished analyzing the data from these trials (see the chart below), which are able to shed some light on a couple of questions that have been asked by growers about thinning.

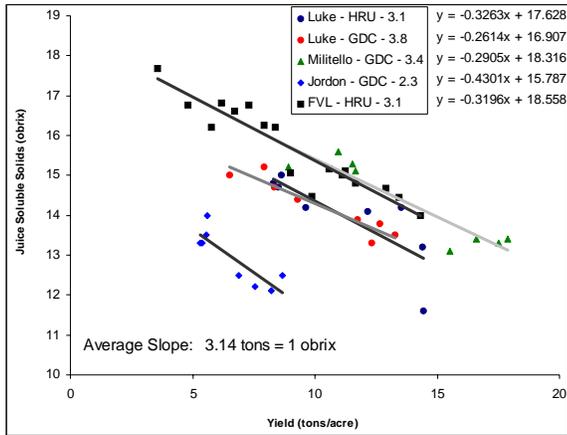


Figure 1. Relationship between yield and soluble solids (brix) in several Lake Erie Concord vineyards in 2003

1) All of the thinning work done at the Vineyard Lab has been done by hand. What happens when you use a machine?

Take a look at the top two lines from the graph. The black line (square points) represents the thinning work done at the Fredonia Vineyard Lab (FVL) on this year with single curtain vines, and the gray line (triangular points) is from Bob and Jamie Militello's farm using Geneva Double Curtain vines, thinned by machine. As you can see, not only do the lines line up almost exactly, they also have the same slope. This means that the yield/Brix relationship was the same at both farms, regardless of the method used to do the thinning (machine vs. hand). As a matter of fact,

we see very similar slopes in all of the training systems at all of the farms, which are located in North East, Portland, Fredonia, and Sheridan. Location and training system didn't really matter - the effect was the same.

2) How does thinning on GDC compare to thinning a single curtain trellis?

Again, let's look at the slope of the lines comparing single curtain trellises (at the Lukes' farm- [dark line in middle] and the Vineyard Lab [dark line at top]) and GDC (Militello [gray line at top], Luke [gray line in middle] and Jordan [single line at bottom]). The relationships once again are all very similar to each other regardless of training system.

3) Mechanical thinning damages the vines too much. They shut down for a while and you lose some of whatever Brix you might have gained by thinning off the fruit.

Again, let's look at how the slopes of the lines compare between the hand-thinned vines here at the Vineyard Lab (black line at the top) and the machine-thinned vines in these trials. If thinning by machine resulted in some sort of Brix "penalty", the slopes of those lines would be different than the hand-thinned. The slopes of both means of thinning are very similar, so in the broad scope of this trial, this assertion of a "penalty" doesn't seem to hold. Of course, this assumes that you aren't breaking lots of canes, removing a lot of leaves, etc. when thinning. If you lose half of your leaves during a thinning pass, you will decrease the ability of your vines to accumulate Brix, but it's not because of the thinning itself.

Does thinning work? Absolutely. Does thinning work using a harvester? Absolutely. Does the thinning response depend on training system? It doesn't appear to. The vine's response to thinning is a physiological one - we are changing the ratio of exposed leaf area to mass of fruit, trying to target that magic number of about 15 cm²/g of fruit. Other factors can certainly impact vine physiology and have an impact on the response to thinning - drought stress, physical injury, damage from pests and disease, etc.

As we mentioned many times this past season, how you take this information and apply it in each individual vineyard DOES vary from farm to farm, even block to block. We will continue working with growers on bringing this information to an "on-the-farm" level in future years, but we believe that this practice is an effective tool in crop management and should be implemented by more of our growers on a regular basis.

We want to thank Fred Luke, Bob Militello and Mike Jordan for their willingness to work with us on these trials.

FREE COMPUTER TRAINING FOR GRAPE GROWERS

Tim Weigle & Tim Martinson

This winter, FREE courses in computer training will be offered specifically to grape growers in the Finger Lakes and Lake Erie region. The training will be offered by Jamestown Community College (W. NY) and the Finger Lakes Community College here in the Finger Lakes. This program arose through a cooperative effort of the Lake Erie and Finger Lakes Regional grape program (Tim Weigle, also with the IPM program provided leadership), grape processor representatives (Tim Moore from Canandaigua, Rich Erdle and Charlene Ryder of National Grape Cooperative), the NY Wine and Grape Foundation, with funding from the net proceeds of Viticulture 2000. The two community colleges (Stephanie Bellian and Jean McGowen of JCC and Carol Joki of FLCC) were able to fund a grant to underwrite remaining costs of this program through the NY Community College Workforce Development Training Grants Program. As a result, this will be a FREE program.

In the Finger Lakes, classes will be held in **January** at Keuka College (for times and dates see registration form posted on our website) and **February** at the FLCC Institute in Canandaigua (not the main campus). **A registration form is included in this newsletter**, and is also posted at our web site:

<http://www.cce.cornell.edu/programs/finger-lakes-grape/growercomputertraining.pdf>

The initial courses in January will cover basics of the Windows operating system, e-mail, web searching, and basic computer operation. Additional classes will be offered in February and March, on more advanced topics like word processing and Excel spreadsheet programs.

These training courses will be offered in two 4 hour sessions. For more information in the Finger Lakes contact:

Carol Ann Joki, Finger Lakes Community College 585-394-3500 x7662 or jokic@flcc.edu

Tim Martinson, Finger Lakes Grape Program 315-536-5134 tem2@cornell.edu

AGR LITE – A NEW CROP INSURANCE OPTION FOR GROWERS

Gerald White

Department of Applied Economics and Management

[Note: This is a different insurance program than the regular crop insurance program, and the November 20 deadline for enrollment does not apply. This program

offers a new and different option for risk management to agricultural producers. - TEM]

A series of meetings is being held across New York state between November 18 and January 15 about a new insurance product, AGR-Lite. AGR-Lite is a streamlined whole-farm revenue protection package that can be used as stand-alone coverage or in addition to other individual crop insurance policies (except AGR). Most farm raised crop, animal, and animal products are eligible for protection. The program is based on the five-year average of selected revenue items reported on IRS Schedule F 1040 or equivalent tax forms; therefore, minimal additional record keeping is required.

AGR-Lite provides protection against low revenue due to unavoidable causes. Covered farm revenue includes income from almost all crops and agricultural commodities including animals and animal products such as milk, aquaculture products grown in a controlled environment, and greenhouse production. **The policy is limited in size to a maximum liability (protection in force) of \$250,000 annually**. Thus it is generally relevant to farms with annual sales from agricultural commodities of approximately \$500,000 or less.

This series of meetings is a joint effort involving New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets, Risk Management Agency of USDA, Farm Credit, NYS Farm Bureau, Cornell Cooperative Extension, and the Department of Applied Economics and Management, Cornell University. After lunch, a breakout session (with case studies) is scheduled where details are covered about how AGR-Lite works for a specific operation. The agenda for the meetings is scheduled as follows:

9:30- coffee and do-nuts

10:00- Welcome and AGR-Lite: terms, conditions, record requirements, and forms. Charles Koines, Risk Management Agency, USDA

11:30- Lunch

12:15- Breakout sessions- case studies. (Three case studies will be available according to the needs at a particular site-greenhouse, fruit, and vegetables. The greenhouse case also features aspects relevant to direct marketing operations.)

1:45- Reconvene from breakouts for a wrap-up and final discussion

2:15-Adjourn

<http://hortmgt.aem.cornell.edu/events/agr-lite.htm>

Note: The January 7 meeting at Montour Falls features a 'case study' specific to grapes. If you can't attend, there are several other dates and locations available. These will be posted at

<http://hortmgt.aem.cornell.edu/index.htm>

UPCOMING EVENTS

January 5 – 28. *Grower Computer Training Sessions, Keuka College, Keuka Park.* Growers can choose from 8 different dates for basic computer training sessions lasting 2 hours each. Training is FREE to NY grape growers. Registration form attached. [See accompanying article for more information.](#)

January 7. Schuyler CCE Office, Rural - Urban Center, 208 Broadway, Montour Falls. *Informational Meeting about AGR-Lite (Adjusted Gross Revenue Insurance)* [See article above for more information.](#)

January 16. *Viticulture session* at the Long Island Ag Forum. Shinnecock Building, Room 209. Suffolk Community College. Riverhead, NY. 9 a.m. to noon.. Topics include weed research update, vineyard weed management, LINY grape research program update, what's new and vine physiology/crop load/ quality. Call 631.727.3595 for information and registration.

January 27. *Wine Grape and Small Fruit Program.* Mid-Atlantic Fruit and Vegetable Convention, Hershey, PA. Intermediate viticulture topics include disease control, vine nutrition, weed control, canopy management and vine training. NJ and PA pesticide credits available. Program is sponsored by the State Horticulture Association of Pennsylvania and organized by Rutgers and U Md cooperative extensions. Registration is required. Program information at <http://gloucester.rce.rutgers.edu/>.

January 27-29. *Unified Wine and Grape Symposium.* Sacramento Convention Center. Sacramento, CA. One of the largest annual wine industry meetings of the year, Unified features growers and researchers on the program. A huge trade show accompanies the convention. More information is at www.unifiedsymposium.org/

February 7-9. *19th Annual Midwest Regional Grape and Wine Conference.* Tan-Tar-A Resort in Osage Beach Beach, Missouri. <http://mtntrv.smsu.edu/calendar.htm>.

February 11. *Pennsylvania Association of Winegrowers Annual Meeting.* Lancaster, PA. Topic is grape varieties, clones and rootstocks. Tentative Program - speakers include Dr. Peter Cousins, USDA-ARS grape rootstock specialist; Dr. Bruce Reisch, grape breeder at Cornell University, and Ms. Lucie Morton, international viticulture consultant. PAW business meeting is also part of the program. Lancaster Farm and Home Center.

February 18-19. *Ontario Fruit and Vegetable Convention. Grape Session.* Brock University, Ste. Catherines, Ontario. Building on Success. A variety of grape topics. Alice Wise, Cornell Cooperative Extension is the featured speaker. Registration is \$55 for both days. Call 800.387.3276 for information.

February 28. *55th Annual Finger Lakes Grape Growers Convention and Trade Show.* 8:00 to 4:30 PM, Waterloo Holiday Inn, Waterloo, NY. Contact Finger Lakes Grape Program 315-536-5134 or tem2@cornell.edu. Registration forms will be posted at www.cce.cornell.edu/programs/finger-lakes-grape

March 15-18. *Wineries Unlimited.* Host Resort. Lancaster, PA. Sponsored by Vineyard and Winery Management. Program features a wide variety of topics on viticulture, enology and wine marketing. Tasting will feature wines from PA, MD and NJ. Dr. Curtis Ellison is expected to be the keynote speaker on matters of wine and health. A large trade show accompanies the meeting. For more information, visit www.vwm-online.com/.

March 18. *New Grape Grower Workshop* in association with Wineries Unlimited. Host Resort. Lancaster, PA. This intensive, full-day overview is directed at people who have just started a vineyard or plan to start a commercial vineyard in the Mid-Atlantic regions. It is team taught by Dr. Tony Wolf (VA Tech), Dr. Joe Fiola (U Md) and Mark Chien (Penn State). It covers all topics associated with developing and operating a commercial vineyard.

March 25. *Lake Erie Regional Grape Program Annual Conference.* SUNY, Fredonia, NY. <http://lenewa.netsync.net/public/lergphom.htm>.

April 1-2. *33rd Annual Wine Industry Workshop.* Ramada Inn, Geneva, NY. Information at <http://www.nysaes.cornell.edu/fst/faculty/henick/wiw/>



Mist Rising from Seneca Lake in October

FLCC INSTITUTE PRIMARY COMPUTER COURSE

REGISTRATION OPTIONS

- **Mail** registration form to FLCC Institute, 4340 Lakeshore Dr., Canandaigua, 14424
- **Fax** registration form to FLCC Institute, 585-396-1743
- **E-mail** institute@flcc.edu course name, date, day; your name; day and evening phone numbers (for confirmation calls or course changes)

PLEASE CALL THE INSTITUTE IF YOU CANNOT ATTEND A COURSE!

- If you register for a course, we are counting on your attendance when we make a decision about the course running.
- Cancel your registration at least 24 business hours prior to course start date.
- **To cancel off a course, call the Institute at 585-394-3500, ext. 7660.**

NOTE NOTE NOTE

FLCC Institute's January courses
are held at Keuka College,
Hegeman Hall Room 410.