



Editors: A list of advisory committee members is attached.

October 9, 1992

LAKE ERIE GRAPE INDUSTRY ADVISORY COMMITTEE NAMED

Geneva, NY—Fifteen grape industry representatives from New York and Pennsylvania have been named to the Lake Erie Regional Grape Industry Advisory Committee. The group was formed as part of an agreement between Cornell University and Penn State, announced in April, to combine grape research and extension programs.

“The advisory committee’s goal is to help guide the efficient delivery of extension programming for growers, while suggesting ways that needed research information can be integrated into growing practices,” says committee chair Doug Moorhead of Moorhead Vineyards, North East, Pennsylvania.

In addition to advising Cornell and Penn State on grape industry needs, the committee will assist in identifying industry funding for specific programs. “In the face of shrinking public support for research and extension, we have to find alternative sources of funding and do more with less,” Moorhead says.

The Lake Erie grape-growing region encompasses about 20,000 acres in western New York and 11,000 acres in Erie County, Pennsylvania. Most grapes grown in the region are native varieties such as Concord or Niagara that are used mainly for nonfermented juices, concentrates, and jams.

Moorhead says to remain competitive with growers in other regions of the United States and the world, Lake Erie area producers must be willing to invest in an aggressive research and extension effort. “We need to find ways to add value to our product, increase yields, and cut production costs.

“That will require research on such things as mechanization, breeding for disease and insect resistance, and canopy management to make the best use of sunlight for optimal growth.” He says the industry advisory committee can enhance the delivery of research-based extension programs by fostering cooperation between growers, researchers, and extension specialists in the two states.

The agreement to form the Lake Erie Regional Center for Grape Research and Extension also called for establishment of a centrally located facility to house research and extension activities; a coordinated research effort with existing faculty from Cornell and Penn State,

carried out by an on-site research staff; formation of an extension team to conduct educational programs in the combined production area; addition of an extension farm management specialist to meet the changing needs of the industry; and increased industry support for research and extension.

The center was established officially on July 1, 1992.

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