

# Cornell Cooperative Extension

## Finger Lakes Grape Program

### Quarterly Report: January-March 2020

#### Program Highlights

- B.E.V. NY 2020 had higher attendance and a larger trade show than ever, thanks in part to an expanded partnership with the NY Wine & Grape Foundation. Over 450 people attended the conference over the three days, and more than 50 exhibitors spilled out of the exhibit hall and into overflow spaces. Several commenters mentioned that it was one of the best conferences they had attended in many years.
- The FLGP has been connecting growers with a wide range of information related to the COVID-19 pandemic. Because the team does not include a farm business management specialist, the connections that we have with other regional teams and campus resources have been invaluable and allow us to provide high-quality, vetted information to our growers in a timely manner.
- We submitted two proposals to the NY Wine & Grape Foundation for funding of field projects that address important issues for the region's grape growers – sour rot and perennial weed management. We are also included as collaborators on two other proposals to the Foundation.

#### Largest-Ever B.E.V. NY Highlights Sustainable Vineyard Practices, Expanded Business Agenda

This year's B.E.V. NY conference took place at the RIT Inn & Conference Center on February 26-28. The conference was the largest ever both in terms of attendance and the number of vendors in the trade show. This year's conference attracted more than 400 growers, winemakers and other industry members not just from the Finger Lakes but all over New York State, who came to learn about new techniques and practices from a range of experts from Cornell, other academic institutions like Washington State, as well as private industry.

This year's Business Day program was created in partnership with the New York Wine & Grape Foundation, and it proved to be a very successful day. Over 100 people attended on Business Day, which featured more sessions than ever, focusing on topics including digital marketing, employee development and retention, effective winery leadership, and a panel discussion of the current state of broader wine industry. The keynote speaker for the day was Ray Isle, executive wine editor for Food & Wine Magazine, who offered his perspective on the place of the New York wine industry in the context of the broader wine world.



*The FLGP's Hans Walter-Peterson was presented this year's Research Award by Mike Colizzi, owner of Ka-shong Glen Vineyard and former technician with the FLGP.*

Wednesday also featured the New York Wine & Grape Foundation's annual Unity Banquet Luncheon, during which the Foundation presents awards to various members of the industry for their work and efforts. This year's Research Award was given to Hans Walter-Peterson, the FLGP's viticulturist and team leader (and team). Other winners from the Finger Lakes included Boundary Breaks Vineyards (Winery Award), Hunt Country Vineyards (Sustainability Award), Fox Run winemaker Peter Bell (Industry Award), and John Brahm III of Arbor Hill Grapery (Lifetime Achievement Award), who passed away the day after last year's B.E.V. NY conference.

The Enology Program featured a number of familiar faces to the wine industry, including Cornell's own Gavin Sacks, Randy Worobo and Patrick Gibney, who all provided timely and important information to growers about topics including wine chemistry, critical sanitation practices in the cellar and solutions for fermentation problems. Chris Gerling and Anna Katharine Mansfield, who lead the Enology Extension program at AgriTech, introduced the new Cornell Craft Beverage Institute, which will provide technical assistance and outreach for the rapidly expanding craft beverage industry in New York.

Pest management was the focus of most of this year's Viticulture Program, with several talks focused on new and innovative practices that could reduce the need for synthetic chemical applications every year, including the potential for hyperspectral sensors to detect disease before they are visible, materials to enhance the integrity of the berry skin to reduce sour rot, and the use of mycorrhizal fungi to enhance nutrient uptake and therefore reduce the need for synthetic

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fertilizers. The talk that probably generated the most interest was given by David Gadoury, a researcher at Cornell AgriTech, who discussed his work on using ultraviolet light to control powdery mildew in a number of horticultural crops, including grapes. His talk at B.E.V. NY has led to two different growers to begin working on building UV light trailers that should be ready for use in their vineyards later this year.

The Trade Show featured more vendors than ever before, with 54 exhibitors displaying at some point over the three day event. Vendors had to be placed in supplemental spaces on Friday because not all of them could fit in the main room. While most of the vendors are from the area, there continues to be an increase in the number who are coming from other parts of the country, recognizing the importance of doing business with increasingly important segment of the wine industry.

Evaluations from this year's meeting were very positive once again. The quality of this year's viticulture program was rated as 'excellent' by more than 65% of those who responded, and several comments were made stating that the program was one of the best in a number of years. We were fortunate that the conference was held just before the restrictions on large gatherings were implemented in response to the corona virus pandemic, which were put in place just a few weeks later.

Next year's conference is scheduled to be held March 3-5, 2021, and we look forward to our continued partnership with the Wine & Grape Foundation to develop a program that will continue to provide our industry with the knowledge they need to continue to succeed.

## **FLGP Connects Grape Growers to Vital COVID-19 Resources**

In addition to all of our preparations for the 2020 growing season, the FLGP has also been providing information to growers about programs and resources related to the COVID-19 pandemic. Although the FLGP does not include a business management specialist, we are fortunate to have access to those specialists on a number of others teams as well as campus-based experts such as Richard Stup with the Agriculture Workforce Development Program. We are able to evaluate the information from these people and programs and provide those pieces that we believe are relevant to growers in our region. We will continue to provide information to the industry as it is developed via our weekly Vineyard Update newsletters, on our website or those of other programs, and other avenues as needed.

## Grant Funding

### Funded Projects

*Monitoring Grapevine Bud Hardiness for Winter Survival.* 1/1/20 – 3/31/20, \$2,632. Funded by Kaplan Fund, NY Wine & Grape Foundation. Collaborators: Tim Martinson, Jennifer Russo

This ongoing project provides important information to growers about the winter survival of grapevine buds. Samples are collected every two weeks from Finger Lakes vineyards and analyzed for their ability to withstand cold temperatures. This information is communicated to growers so they can make determine if they need to adjust their pruning practices to compensate for bud injury. Results are posted at <https://grapesandwine.cals.cornell.edu/extension/bud-hardiness-data>.

### Proposals submitted

*Evaluation of a Berry Cuticle Supplement to Reduce Cluster Rots in Vineyards.* Submitted to New York Wine & Grape Foundation/Lake Erie Regional Grape Research & Extension Program. Proposed budget: \$17,589 (Year 2 of two-year project). Collaborator: Alice Wise – CCE Suffolk County

This project is evaluating the effectiveness of a product called 'HydroShield' at reducing Botrytis bunch rot and sour rot in grapes. HydroShield is a proprietary product currently under development at Oregon State University, but is not yet commercially available. HydroShield is purported to thicken the berry cuticle and therefore provide improved resistance to egg laying of *Drosophila* fruit flies. In preliminary tests in Oregon, when sprayed on grapes, HydroShield has reduced egg laying by *Drosophila suzukii* (spotted wing drosophila) and subsequent development of cluster rot. We did not see a significant impact from the treatment in 2019 due to the very low disease pressure that we had at the end of the season.



*Evaluation of Methods for Management of Field Bindweed in New York Vineyards.* Submitted to New York Wine & Grape Foundation/Lake Erie Regional Grape Research & Extension Program. Proposed budget: \$19,563 (Year 3 of three-year project). Collaborator: Bryan Brown - NYS IPM Program.

Perennial weeds are an increasing problem in Finger Lakes vineyards. This project has been evaluating the effects of glyphosate, rimsulfuron, and cultivation on weed control, with particular attention to bindweed, and measure the effect of each system on yield and profitability so that growers can make more informed management decisions. Results from the first year of this project resulted in the addition of field bindweed to the list of approved weeds for rimsulfuron by the Department of Environmental Conservation.

## Cornell Cooperative Extension Finger Lakes Grape Program

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The Finger Lakes Grape Program is a Cornell Cooperative Extension  
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