Quarterly Report: July—September 2020

Quarterly Summary:

The period from July to September this year featured the continuation of warm and abnormally dry conditions in the Finger Lakes. This led to some vineyards showing signs of water stress just as harvest got underway, but not enough to slow down ripening. Spring frosts and a few other factors have resulted in low yields in most varieties and vineyards this year, but while the quantity may be lower, the quality looks to be spectacular. This year’s grape crop has been ripening faster than usual, and with very little disease pressure because of the lack of rain, there is a lot of optimism about the quality of the 2020 vintage.

While the industry has been busy making the most of this year’s high-quality crop, the FLGP has continued its work to gather information and develop new knowledge that will benefit Finger Lakes growers in both the short and the long terms. This quarter’s report highlights just a few of the activities that we initiated or completed over the past three months in support of that development and transfer of knowledge. We are looking forward now to the end of harvest and our field season, and to planning for this year’s winter conference, B.E.V. NY 2021, which will be held online March 3-5, 2021. More information about the Finger Lakes Grape Program and our activities can be found at our website, http://flgp.cce.cornell.edu.

Annual ‘Veraison to Harvest’ Project Provides Valuable Information to Growers

Beginning in late August, FLGP staff started collecting weekly fruit samples to monitor ripening progress as part of the annual statewide “Veraison to Harvest” project. In cooperation with Tim Martinson, statewide grape extension specialist, we collected 44 fruit samples from 17 sites around the Finger Lakes every week, beginning on August 25. These samples, along with others from the other grape growing regions of the state (Lake Erie, Hudson Valley, Long Island, North Country), are analyzed at Cornell’s Craft Beverage Analytical Lab, for important ripening parameters including sugar content, pH, acidity and yeast-available nitrogen. The results from these samples, along with harvest summaries from the state’s grape growing regions, are included in the weekly Veraison to Harvest newsletter that is sent to all enrolled growers. Four issues of the newsletter were written during the current quarter (which can be found at the project’s website, https://grapesandwine.cals.cornell.edu/newsletters/veraison-harvest/), with a few more issues still to come that will carry through most of the remainder of the harvest season. This year, the information from these samples has been telling us that the fruit was ripening faster than normal. Growers and wineries use this information to help guide their own sampling and harvest decisions, which can make or break a vintage.
FLGP Completes Third Year of Field Trial on Management of Bindweed in Vineyards

Hedge and field bindweed have been an increasing presence in Finger Lakes vineyards in recent years. If left uncontrolled, they can climb up grapevines and take over the trellis space, which can lead to increased disease development due to reduction in sun exposure and air movement within the canopy, as well as limiting the vine’s ability to intercept sunlight and thus ripen fruit. Our trial, conducted in cooperation with Dr. Bryan Brown with the NYSIPM program, has been conducted in two locations – a commercial vineyard in Yates County which has high populations of field bindweed, and the Teaching & Demonstration Vineyard where hedge bindweed has been an issue since it was planted 8 years ago. The third year of this field trial has been mostly focused on “double checking” the results that we got during the first two years of the trial.

While we have not analyzed the data yet, the visual results from this trial appear to confirm most of what we had observed in the first two years. One of the primary findings has been that one of the materials that we tested, rimsulfuron, appears to be more effective at controlling hedge bindweed than field bindweed. This is important information that will be used to give growers better recommendations on what materials to use, and not to use, when trying to manage field or hedge bindweed.
‘Viticulture 101’ Course for EnoCert Goes Online

On August 18, FLGP viticulturist Hans Walter-Peterson led the first virtual version of his ‘Viticulture 101’ course for the EnoCert Program, which is an industry certification program developed by Cornell’s Enology Extension Program at Cornell AgriTech. The course is normally held as a one-day workshop combining indoor presentations and a visit to the Teaching Vineyard near Dresden. Like almost all of our extension activities this year, however, the course was adapted to an online version. Twenty-three people attended the three hour workshop, with attendees coming from as near as Penn Yan and as far away as Utah. The people attending the course represented a range of occupations and experience in the industry, and therefore a wide range of questions that they were hoping to learn about.

This was the fifth consecutive year that Hans has presented this course as part of the EnoCert program, educating over 100 people over that span of time about the basics of grape growing in New York.

FLGP in the News


https://www.winebusiness.com/news/?go=getArticle&dataId=236140