



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.



AROUND NEW YORK...

Statewide (Tim Martinson)

Welcome to our second week of *Veraison to Harvest*. Last week we had some challenges getting back in the rhythm of sample collection and analysis. COVID-19 played a part – in that some samples were delivered to the AgriTech Administration building (Jordan Hall) instead of the Cornell Enology lab. This week has run smoother.

After being sort of in the early stages of post-veraison last week (or some like Concord and Cabernet Franc were not quite there), this week's samples (see fruit composition table p. 6) showed significant gains in maturity. Led by the Minnesota cold climate cultivars with juice soluble solids ranging from 18.21° Brix – about 2° ahead of last year, gaining about 1.6° since last week. Hybrids were variable, ranging from 12.0° to 18.8° Brix (1.3° ahead of last year). Many vinifera varieties were hovering in the mid teens, but earlier varieties (Chardonnay, Grüner Veltliner, and Lemberger) were up around 18° Brix – and 1° ahead of last year at this time. Natives (Concord, Catawba, Niagara) hovered around 12° Brix, but are 2-4° ahead of 2019.

Acids dropped a lot. Led by a 5.1 g/l drop in the Natives – but vinifera followed closely behind, averaging a 4.6 g/l drop in titratable acidity (TA). Hybrids lost 3.8 g/l on average. Acids dropped more slowly in the cold-hardy Minnesota varieties, which dropped 2.1 g/l last week. But overall, TAs are ranging 3-6 g/liter lower than last year at this time.

Berry weight is variable – but seems to be on track with what we saw last year – Not bigger, not smaller overall.

Thanks to Robin Ross of Arrowhead Spring Vineyards in Niagara County near Lockport for contributing samples from her vineyard again this year.

Finally, we highlight viticulturist Marc Fuchs' effort to measure the impact of grapevine leafroll infections on Concord vines (page 5) with an experimental planting at Cornell AgriTech.



These, the latest cold-climate variety released by the University of Minnesota's grape breeding program, was harvested by Alice Wise's program from her variety trial at the Long Island Horticultural Research and Extension Center in Riverhead, NY. Photo by Alice Wise

Long Island (Alice Wise)

After a season of drought, the East End of Long Island has recently been experiencing occasional showers. In general we need the rain. That said, it is just about at the time of year – around Labor Day – when cluster rot/fruit fly season commences. The significance of this complex will depend on the frequency and pattern of rainfall over the next few weeks. Currently, there is a smidgen of Botrytis and just a few fruit flies. However, birds have been ravenous so there are definitely some damaged clusters around. Bird damage, grape berry moth damage, tight/compact clusters and thin berry skins are all contributing factors. Botrytides usually help but sometimes seem to be easily overwhelmed when pressure is high.

In the LHRBC vineyard, Itasca, a newly released cold hardy hybrid from Minnesota, was harvested Sept. 3 (see photo). The 3 year old vines had a tough year between drought stress and being ultra-exposed to the high winds/salt damage during the Aug. 4 tropical conditions. These vines are VSP-trained though their floppy habit suggests that they may be better suited to the high wire. We Brix tested a few

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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



ENOCERT

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

"Beautiful Weather For Finger Lakes Grape Harvest: However, the Covid-19 pandemic and a cut-back in purchases affect grape prices". *Wine Business Monthly* website. Posted September 9, 2020.

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

"Finger Lakes Wines and Grapes: Season making growers happy". The Auburn Citizen. Posted August 13, 2020. https://auburnpub.com/lifestyles/finger-lakes-wines-and-grapes-season-making-growers-happy/article_ade8bb26-a2c6-56a8-b07b-f88daf4cf16a.html

Cornell Cooperative Extension Finger Lakes Grape Program

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The Finger Lakes Grape Program is a Cornell Cooperative Extension partnership between Cornell University and the Cornell Cooperative Extension Associations in Ontario, Seneca, Schuyler, Steuben, Wayne and Yates Counties.

