

Cornell Cooperative Extension

Finger Lakes Grape Program

Quarterly Report: July—September 2021

Program Highlights

- The FLGP will be participating in a newly-funded project from USDA that will be working with grape growers to help them begin to use the MyEV digital viticulture tool developed by colleagues in the Lake Erie region of NY. This is the second successful grant that the FLGP is part of that will focus on helping growers to become familiar with some of the ideas and tools used in digital viticulture. The use of new sensors and online tools that can analyze their data has the potential to make significant improvements in vineyard managers' ability to understand the variability in their vineyards and how to operate them more efficiently and sustainably.
- We held 4 Tailgate Meetings for growers during the quarter, with almost 100 growers attending them. The Tailgate Meeting on August 3, held in Yates County, featured demonstrations of two types of equipment that have the potential to reduce the environmental impact of managing the ground cover under the vines, either by mowing the cover crop in place, or through precision application of herbicides which could significantly reduce the amount of materials applied to the ground for weed control.

Tailgate Meetings

The FLGP continued its series of both virtual and in-person Tailgate Meetings this summer. The virtual Tailgate Meetings were held on July 20 and August 17, and the in-person meetings took place on July 6 and August 3. About 100 people attended these meetings in total, including over 40 at the August 3 Tailgate Meeting.



The meeting on August 3, held at Kashong Glen Vineyards near Penn Yan, included a demonstration of two under-vine mowers and a precision weed sprayer that is being evaluated by Lynn Sosnoskie, weed scientist

at Cornell AgriTech. There is increasing interest in the region in reducing the use of herbicides under the vine rows, while minimizing the disturbance of the soil through practices like cultivation, and under-vine mowers could be a solution for these growers. Tom Eskildsen from the Soil & Water Conservation District office in Yates County also talked about the funding that his office has received to purchase two mowers for use by a “pilot” group of growers in the region, which should be delivered at some point during the 2022 growing season.

Veraison to Harvest Newsletter

The arrival of harvest also means the start of the annual *Veraison to Harvest* newsletter, which provides the industry with information about how harvest is progressing and numerous articles about various viticulture and enology projects conducted at Cornell and with other institutions. Each week during harvest, Donald Caldwell, FLGP viticulture technician, collects 20-30 samples of grapes, representing multiple varieties and vineyard locations in the Finger Lakes, for analysis at the Enology Extension Lab at Cornell AgriTech in Geneva. Similar samples are collected from other grape growing regions in New York, and the results from all of these are published each week in the *Veraison to Harvest* newsletter. The newsletter is distributed to over 150 grape growers in the Finger Lakes region, and about 400 growers statewide. This will be the final year that the project will be headed by Tim Martinson, statewide viticulture extension specialist, who will be retiring at the beginning of 2022. Plans for continuing the project are currently under discussion among other viticulture and enology extension staff. Past issues of *Veraison to Harvest* can be found at <https://grapesandwine.cals.cornell.edu/newsletters/veraison-harvest/>.



Assessing Sour Rot Trials



In years with significant rainfall during harvest, sour rot and other late-season cluster rots can reduce growers' yields and revenues by 30% or more. The FLGP has been testing two new materials to see if they can help to reduce these losses to growers by strengthening the waxy cuticle layer around the berries, which could reduce cracking that allows for the microbes that cause sour rot to enter the fruit. We established trials at two locations in the Finger Lakes earlier this year – one at our Teaching & Demonstration Vineyard near Dresden, and the other in a commercial Riesling vineyard in Seneca County. All of the plots were assessed at the end of September to determine how much sour rot had developed in the treated and untreated plots. The data from these assessments is still being analyzed and will be reported to the industry this winter at our B.E.V. NY conference. These trials are being funded by the NY Farm Viability Institute and the NY Wine & Grape Foundation.

Grant Funding

Funded Grants

Cost effective spatial data visualization and decision support for small and medium-sized vineyards.
Submitted to USDA-NIFA-AFRI Agriculture Economics and Rural Communities Program: Small and Medium-Sized Farms. Total Budget: \$650,000 over 3 years. Collaborators: Terry Bates – Cornell Lake Erie Research & Extension Laboratory, Katie Gold – Cornell AgriTech, Yu Jiang – Cornell AgriTech, Jennifer Russo – Lake Erie Regional Grape Program.

This project will continue the development of the “MyEV” digital viticulture tool developed by Terry Bates and his colleagues as part of the recently completed SCRI-funded Efficient Vineyard project. The goal of the project is to enable the adoption of precision viticulture technology and practices by expanding the capabilities of the MyEV tool, allowing growers to easily upload their own vineyard data and receive prescription management maps based on that data. The FLGP and LERGP will be working with a small group of growers in each region to begin using spatial data from their own vineyards in order to address issues of importance on each of their farms.



The My EV tool allows growers to collect their own spatial data and easily create maps based on that data. These maps can guide growers in making better decisions about their vineyard management practices.

Cornell Cooperative Extension Finger Lakes Grape Program

Hans Walter-Peterson—Team Leader
Donald Caldwell—Viticulture Technician

flgp.cce.cornell.edu

*"Cornell Cooperative Extension is an equal
opportunity, affirmative action educator and employer"*

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.

