

# Cornell Cooperative Extension Lake Erie Regional Grape Program

Second Quarter Report 2023

A cooperative program between Cornell and Penn State Universities, Cornell Cooperative Extension Associations in Chautauqua, Cattaraugus, Erie and Niagara Counties, Penn State Extension – Erie County, NYS IPM Program, National Grape Cooperative, Constellation Brands, Walker's Fruit Basket and growers of the Lake Erie Grape Industry



## Coffee Pot Meetings

Jennifer Phillips Russo & Megan Luke  
LERGP Extension Team

Cornell Cooperative Extension's Lake Erie Regional Grape Program (LERGP) is pleased to announce that they offer Coffee Pot Meetings. Coffee Pot meetings were started years ago in an effort to connect with local growers to address their needs during the growing season. These meetings are typically hosted by grape growers in the region that are willing to invite the group into their barn/garage. LERGP brings coffee, doughnuts, the latest research information, and recertification credits.



In addition, the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) and the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture (PDA) have both approved offering pesticide recertification credits at these meetings to aid our growers. For each meeting one credit is available to both New York and Pennsylvania licensed pesticide applicators. This quarter, there were 9 Coffee Pot Meetings and 250 total participants reached for May and June 2023.

The Coffee Pot Meetings are discussions on timely viticulture, business management, and integrated pest management. We are pleased to announce that our successful programming has been adopted in other commodities and states! The LERGP team is excited to be able to continue to offer educational outreach and pesticide recertification credits to our industry stakeholders.



## MyEV Workshop

Dr. Terry Bates and Jennifer Phillips Russo held a MyEV Workshop as a direct result of our advisory committee suggestions. Our growers asked for more opportunities to come in and learn more about the MyEV Tool and how it may benefit them in their operations. MyEV Tool is a precision agricultural tool that was developed for the grape industry through the 6.2 million dollar Specialty Crop Research Initiative grant, the Efficient Vineyard Project. This led to another grant with Dr. Terry Bates through NIFA's AFRI grant, Cost effective spatial data visualization and decision support for small and medium-sized vineyards. It is our goal to engage producers to use personalized digital agriculture solutions in their own operations.



Cornell University



PennState Extension



The problem is that most small producers do not have the tools (process) or information (content) or experience (high impact activities) to achieve transformational education in digital agriculture. By integrating research-based digital agriculture education, new spatial processing tools, and producer-led on-farm activities will lead to transformational education in spatial-data driven variable-rate farm management. We held seven one-on-one meetings with growers to get them started this quarter and had 10 attendees at our first MyEV Workshop.

### **Mycorrhizae Fungi Grant**

Dr. Justine Vanden Heuvel and Jennifer Phillips Russo collaborate on a Federal Capacity Funds grant, at the urging of the industry, to study mycorrhizae fungi applications to existing and pre-plant grapevines. The inoculations have worked well at increasing mycorrhizal associations on roots and increasing petiole nutrients. However, we want to look at impact on vine growth, fruit composition, etc. I collaborated with six growers to inoculate their vines and will be conducting data collection throughout the season.



### **Microclimate Sensor Grant**

Dr. Jason Londo and Jennifer Phillips Russo collaborate on tracking grapevine cold hardiness and phenology across the region with microclimate sensors deployed in 15 grower collaborator vineyards.

We are collecting data from five locations on Lake Erie, five locations located on the bench, and five locations on the escarpment. The team collects data weekly to help achieve the objectives of this study to conduct phenological assays for Concord grapes in multiple locations, to determine the variability between vineyards, and to provide updated field cold hardiness/phenology and hopefully begin to build phenology predictions for the New York grapevine industry.



### **Podcasts**

After preparation, meetings and discussions with both universities, podcasts continued this quarter with one a week. This content is also distributed through our youtube channel as a video blog. The video blog has been around for a few years and views are typically just a little bit higher than the podcast. Overall, we've increased total viewership by more than 50% due to the increase in distribution methods. In the second quarter, we delivered 6 Podcasts, 267 views on YouTube for those podcasts with 385 downloads on Buzzsprout.

### **HeyMarket**

LERGP has developed a number of different contact lists for purposes of meeting reminders, phenology updates and other promotional materials. HeyMarket allows us to distribute this material and information via text message. Growers are able to respond to these alerts and we have been able to quickly answer questions and expand contacts with this technology. A large majority of growers attending virtual meetings prefer to get these reminders via text and report actually receiving them as well. Growers would often get an e-mail reminder prior to a meeting but actually read it after the meeting was over. We continually collect grower interest in receiving text alerts and have sent out 16 text messages this quarter delivering important and timely information to 4,800 connections.



## Lake Erie Regional Grape Program Vacancy

This Lake Erie Regional Grape Program said farewell to Kevin Martin, LERGP's Business Management Specialist. We are sad to see Kevin go, but we support his decision to enter the grower stakeholders and will continue our relationship. The Lake Erie Regional Grape Program, Cornell Cooperative Extension, and Penn State Extension would like to assure you that we are working together to fill the vacant Business Management Specialist position on the Lake Erie Regional Grape Program team. We are currently accepting applications.



## New Hire Onboarding- Megan Luke, Penn State Extension

As a new hire starting on March 6<sup>th</sup>, 2023, much of March and April were spent learning the requisite systems at Penn State and Cornell Universities. Beyond the University systems, contact was made with the Pennsylvania Dept. of Agriculture and training was received to be able to register Extension programs for Pennsylvania pesticide applicator license recertification credits.

Onboarding has been completed, and skillset includes registering events through Cvent and the Pennsylvania Dept. of Agriculture, providing necessary documentation to register events through the New York Dept of Environmental Conservation, requisitioning funds, and assisting in membership management as a part of the Lake Erie Regional Grape Program.

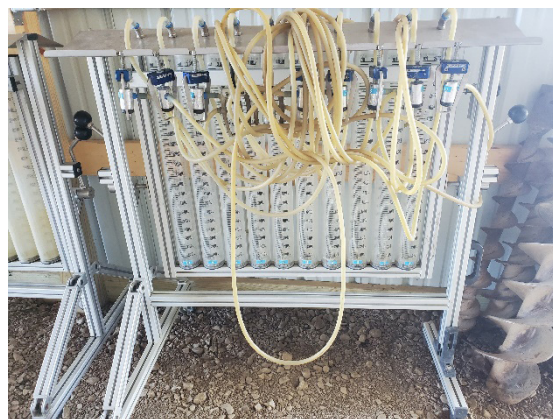
I have had the opportunity to participate in several outreach events and conferences, as well as accompany my team members on numerous site visits. I am excited to begin my career in the Lake Erie Region and to begin developing programming for our grower community.

## Pesticide Sprayer Calibration

With a strong background in pesticide application best practices, I have worked to secure funding to expand the Penn State pesticide sprayer calibration program into the Lake Erie Region. Two sets of calibration equipment have been approved for purchase through Penn State Extension and the Pennsylvania Dept of Agriculture and will be shipped from Belgium this summer. I have received training from the Penn State Extension Pesticide Education team and will be able to offer core credit presentations for Lake Erie region growers. I have also been approved through the NY DEC as a



*Spray coverage demo with water sensitive paper*



*Customized equipment for pesticide sprayer calibration*



recertification credit speaker. I will be offering calibration services and coverage demonstrations to growers in both NY and PA next spring. I am developing data-driven dashboards to demonstrate the impacts of sprayer calibration in terms of economics and agroecology.

### **Lake Erie Regional Grape Program (LERGP)**

Jennifer Phillips Russo & Megan Luke, LERGP Extension Team

Cornell Cooperative Extension's Lake Erie Regional Grape Program (LERGP) is a membership program for NY and PA growers. As the Penn State Extension team member, I am responsible for providing resources and information to our growers via updates on Penn State research, surveys, and programs.

This quarter, there were 9 Coffee Pot Meetings and 250 total participants reached for May and June 2023. Crop Updates are released weekly to growers via email, as of June 30<sup>th</sup> I have written ten articles.

The LERGP team is excited to be able to continue to offer educational outreach and pesticide recertification credits to our industry stakeholders, and I am happy to be able to add core credit presentations.



### **Vineyard Improvement Program-**

Kim Knappenberger, Program Aide, LERGP

There are 6 new projects this quarter totaling just over 145 acres of Concord grape acreage to be removed. These applicants are from Chautauqua, Niagara and Erie counties. Site visits were conducted for each of these applicants as well as a couple of potential applicants that have yet to apply.

There were no projects finalized during this quarter.

There are 29 projects in progress currently and 24 completed. All applicants have been notified of the extended closing of the program and are working to have projects completed by the end of the 2024 growing season.

### **NEWA**

We installed a new wifi KestrelMet 6000 station at CLEREL. This station has 3 soil sensors at different depths. A range extender is required for the wifi and is still not consistently connecting.

The stations have been pretty reliable this past quarter with only the occasional hiccup in service with the exception of the Brant Onset HOBO station. The solar panel has been overcharging the battery during the day which has caused the station to shut down during the daylight hours. Once the sun relented for the day the station would backfill the information collected by the sensors through the day. It is more reliable after reorienting the solar panel and blocking off half of it. Onset support will be ordering a new replacement datalogger and sending in the next quarter.

Seven new KestrelMet 6000 stations have been ordered to be installed later in the year. Four of the



stations are going to The Finger Lakes region to replace old stations in disrepair or fill areas where data is lacking. The other three stations will be placed in the Lake Erie region – one is a replacement and the other 2 are new sites.

Second quarter impacts:

VIP contacts – 33 emails and phone calls

NEWA contacts – 36 emails and phone calls



### Second Quarter 2023 totals:

Publications - Lake Erie Vineyard Notes Newsletters (2) and LERGP Crop Updates (10)

Podcasts(6) - weekly podcasts available on <http://lergp.com/podcasts>

Web resources - <https://lergp.cce.cornell.edu>, <http://lergp.com> and <https://www.efficientvineyard.com>

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Concord Bloom at CLEREL -  
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