

LERGP 2025
First Quarter Impacts



Cornell Cooperative Extension
Lake Erie Regional Grape Program

 PennState Extension

Cornell Cooperative Extension

Lake Erie Regional Grape Program

First Quarter Report 2025

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



Jennifer Phillips Russo-LERGP Viticulture Specialist, Team Lead

Cornell EPA ESA Roundtable Discussion

The Lake Erie Regional Grape Program organized a virtual meeting with Viticulture Extension Associates from Cornell and Penn State Universities, Pathologists from Cornell, Entomologist from Cornell, United States Department of Agriculture, Environmental Protection Agency, New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture, Cornell's NYS Integrated Pest Management, and Cornell's Pesticide Safety Education Program to discuss how to support our agricultural stakeholders during the transitional time of pesticide label requirement changes and changing EPA ESA regulations. This discussion on how to formulate what future Train-the-trainer education for NYS and PA should look like/require and then possibly be used as a template for the rest of the land grant universities to follow. Elyssa Arnold, USDA Regulatory Risk Assessor, Office of Pest Management Policy presented on the background of EPA's efforts to comply with ESA for pesticide registrations and/or provide some detail on the mitigation approaches in the Herbicide and Insecticide Strategies (expected will be mirrored in the upcoming Fungicide Strategy). This meeting resulted in transparent communication and collaboration for a successful transition.

44th Annual Long Island Ag Forum Guest Speaker

I was asked to be a guest speaker at the 44th Annual Long Island Ag Forum, which is a two-day educational program for all those in the agriculture and ornamental horticulture industries. I presented on MyEV: Using Spatial Data for Improved Vineyard Management. MyEV was developed as a free, web-based tool to help growers collect, process, and use spatial data for improved vineyard management. The technological components of digital agriculture are developing quickly and there is growing evidence on the positive impact of precision viticulture applications on production efficiency and environmental sustainability. I spoke on how to set up a data collector, scout for data in the field using your phone, and create a basic map to inform your pest management decisions. The MyEV tool allows your whole team to collect and manage data together. Pest management data and observations can be entered into the program and developed into maps to assess the need for pesticide use and to target pesticides to areas that are above desired threshold values.

Michigan State's 2025 Orchard and Vineyard Show Guest Speaker

I was asked to be a guest speaker at Michigan State University's 2025 Northwest Michigan's Vineyard and Orchard Show in Traverse City, MI. I presented Advancements in Spotted Lanternfly Management: Strategies and Insights, an overview of current strategies for managing the invasive spotted lanternfly, a significant vineyard threat. This event was well attended with over 100 in attendance.

Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture Spotted Lanternfly Quarterly Meeting

Megan Luke, Brian Walsh and I attended the PDA SLF Quarterly meeting to update attendees on their pilot research of Spotted Lanternfly and Mechanized Grape Harvest. This very important work has mobilized industry, regulatory agencies, food science departments, and engineers to begin to work on strategies for mitigation and management strategies as well as taint and toxicity studies.

2025 New York Wine and Grape Foundation Reporting Session

I attended the Virtual New York Wine and Grape Foundation Funding Reporting session to relay de-

liverables of research that was awarded funding for 2024. I updated the group on the great work the Lake Erie Regional Grape Program conducted on the Network of Environmental Weather Applications (NEWA) to ensure growers have reliable weather data to aid in their viticulture management. I also reported on the project, Evaluating Osmotic Protectant, Glycine Betaine, as a Multifaceted Approach to Enhance Grapevine Stress Tolerance and Productivity, and the Spotted Lanternfly Mechanized Harvest Pilot Study.

Frost and Frost Protection Strategies Webinar

Cornell Viticulture Extension Associates and I organized a Frost and Frost Protection Strategies Webinar for growers in NYS and regionally focused on the impacts of frost on grapevines and strategies for protecting them from frost damage. Attendees heard from Dr. Michela Centinari from Penn State, Dr. Jason Londo from Cornell, and Dr. Jim Willwerth from Brock University as they discussed identifying frost damage and the best methods for safeguarding your vines.

Fifth Annual Eastern Viticulture and Enology Forum Webinar Series

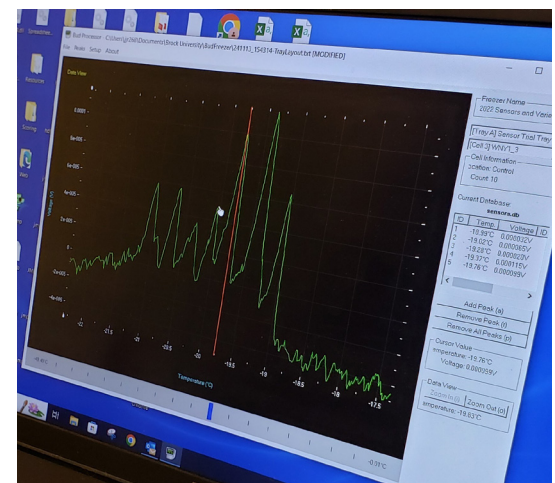
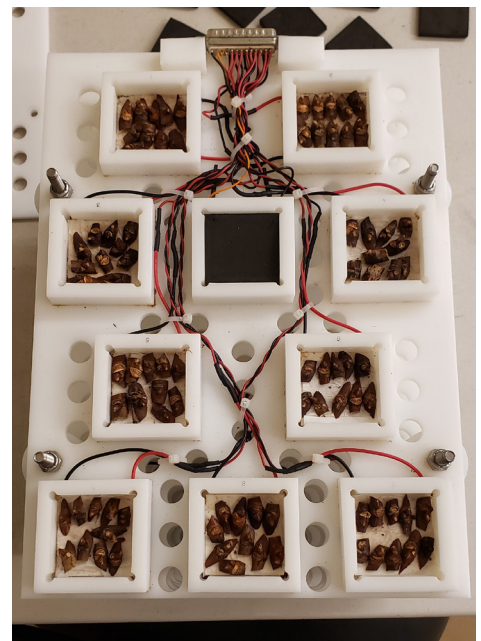
The fifth edition of the Eastern Viticulture and Enology Forum (EVEF) webinar series is a collaborative effort between the Penn State Extension Grape and Wine Team and viticulture and/or enology Extension programs from the following U.S. land grant institutions: Colorado State University, Cornell University, University of Georgia, Iowa State University, University of Maryland, Michigan State University, University of Minnesota, North Carolina State University, Ohio State University, and Rutgers University, Texas A&M University, University of Vermont, Virginia Tech, and University of Wisconsin. As part of the Eastern Viticulture and Enology Forum Webinar Series, this session is a collaborative effort between these viticulture and enology extension programs coordinated for grape growers and winemakers. Megan Luke and I were panelists that helped organize these webinars for growers across the Northeast, and I was also an expert panelist on floor management strategies. These meetings are well attended with over 100 attendees and up to 300.

New York Wine and Grape Foundation's Bold NY B.E.V. Conference

The New York Wine and Grape Foundation sponsors an in-person conference in the Finger Lakes Region every year with more than 200 grape growers, winemakers, students, researchers, and business leaders from New York and surrounding states attend B.E.V. NY each year. I was asked to be an expert panelist on Weather and Wine: Insights into Climate and Vintage. Andrew Holden was the business keynote speaker discussing Economics of Grape Production in New York and When is it Time to Remove a Vineyard? We are proud to share our expertise across the state.

Monitoring Grape Bud Hardiness

Dr. Jason Londo, and the LERGP team have been collaborating on grapevine cold hardiness monitoring since 2019. Dr. Londo's lab focuses on understanding the interaction between climate stresses and genetic diversity in fruit crops, manifested as physiological optimization and adaptation. Dr. Londo manages the Cornell grapevine cold hardiness monitoring program and [associated website](#). The Lake Erie Regional Grape Program has acquired equipment (freezers and data acquisition units) to use Digital Thermal Analysis (DTA) at the Cornell Lake Erie Research and Extension Laboratory (CLEREL). The DTA unit at CLEREL allows the research



and extension team to process extension samples at CLEREL and do more frequent and detailed evaluations. A major goal is to document how crop adjustment and crop load impacts bud hardiness and potential crops of Concord, Niagara, and other cultivars that we monitor – and thereby evaluate the economic risks of over cropping and potential freeze damage based on production practices. This information would allow grape growers to adjust practices and respond to climatic events.

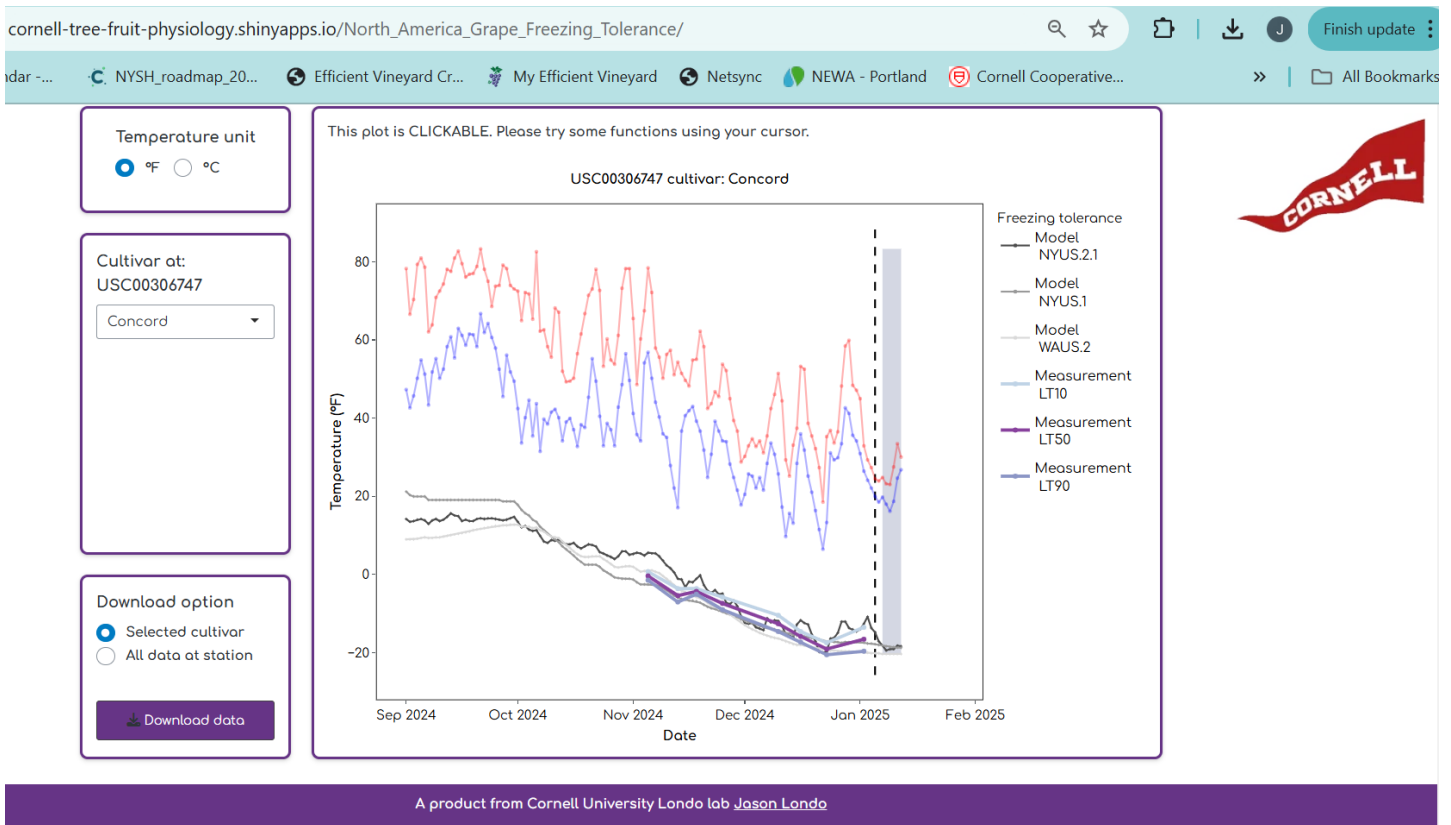


Figure 1. Screenshot of the Cornell Cold Hardiness Website data for Concord in Portland, NY first week of 2025 and previous weeks.

Measure Impact of Microclimate on Grapevine Cold Hardiness

Dr. Jason Londo and I continued the third and final replicate of our winter microclimate study, which tracks local variation in cold hardiness and budbreak phenology in lakeside microclimates in the Finger Lakes and Lake Erie. The team continued to collect and monitor Concord buds at 15 different locations throughout the dormant season to gain a better understanding of microclimates on cold hardiness and allow grape growers to adjust practices and respond to climatic events.

2025 Lake Erie Regional Grape Program's In-Person Winter Grower Conference

The Lake Erie Regional Grape Program held an excellent program for the 2025 Winter Grower Conference featuring experts from many fields. The grower advisory panel had many suggestions of important topics that they wanted information from. As always, the day was full of information on the latest research-based tools that can be taken home and applied to your vineyard. The educational presentations provided the opportunity to get information that growers need regarding cash



flow in the wake of disaster, Mancozeb discussion, canopy and fruit thinning, SLF updates, what is needed to become compliant with the EPA's Endangered Species Act regulations changes and label changes, disease identification, disease and pest updates, as well as learn about the information and resources you need to sustain vineyard production.



Andrew Holden- LERGP Penn State Extension Business Management Educator

Winter Conferences

PA Wine Marketing Research Board Winter Conference

I attended the PAWMRB Winter Conference in State College on February 26th and 27th. I was able to connect with my Penn State colleges and discuss upcoming research and opportunities for business management programming across the state. Additionally, I met many growers from across the state and listened to the educational presentations about the industry and the research being done currently.

B.E.V. New York

I was asked to be the Keynote business speaker at the 2025 B.E.V. Conference, held in Canandaigua, NY on March 4th and 5th. My two presentations were focused on when is it time to remove a vineyard from production and using enterprise budgets to calculate operating cost. Hans Walter-Peterson and I co-presented on enterprise budgets. I spoke with many growers afterwards and provided them with resources on budgets and decision tools. I made many great connections with Cornell colleagues and NY state growers alike.

Erie County Horticultural Society Banquet

Megan Luke and I spoke to the Erie Hort Society at their annual meeting and banquet on March 19th in North East, PA. I shared some updates on 1-9 enforcement and reminded growers to make sure they are keeping proper records. The information was timely for many growers and immigration enforcement is increasing its presence and has potential to continue.

LERGP Winter Conference

The LERGP conference was held March 20th at SUNY Fredonia. I spoke on cash flows and how to calculate potential and current farm cash flows. This topic was from our advisory board and addressed the potential cash flow issues following the spring frost in 2024. The conference was a great day of education for the industry, and I was able to have many in depth conversations with growers about economic issues and questions. I received suggestions on future programming as well as willingness to participate in future research.

Essential Skills Training

Penn State University requires newly hired staff to attend their onboarding training in State College. I was unable to attend the training the first month of my hiring, as it was during B.E.V. NY in 2024. Therefore, I attended in 2025 on March 25-27. This training was a great opportunity to meet some PSU college of agriculture staff I have not yet met in person, learn more about university resources

and procedures, and connect with a cohort of newly hired staff like myself.



Grant Support and Education

In the first quarter of 2025 work with grants continued with two grants for NY Growers. One that closed April 7th and one we are still waiting to open.

These grants included:

- Northeast Regional Food Business Center's Business Builder Grant
- Resilient Food Systems Infrastructure Program - Equipment-Only Grant

Our growers were made aware of such grants through bi-weekly Crop Updates articles, an available grants handout, and at in-person meetings. During this period, I was able to meet with many growers both in-office and on-farm to discuss which grants would be the most advantageous for their operations. As well as assisting with any questions they had regarding the process.

FSA's Marketing Assistance for Specialty Crops (MASC) program Administered

The Marketing Assistance for Specialty Crops (MASC) program was announced in December and closed 3 weeks later in January 2025. Through crop updates and text alerts, I was able to alert growers of this program and encouraged them to sign up. The program provided payments for established specialty crop growers who certified crop sales in 2023 or 2024. Growers in Erie County PA likely received over \$1 million dollars in payments, and Chautauqua County NY likely saw the same number.

Wine and Grape Classifieds

I continue to manage the classifieds for New York and Erie, PA. Listings are updated on a regular basis.

The NY Grapes & Wine Classifieds is a website for grape growers, winery owners, and other industry professionals to post and view ads for industry specific items and jobs. The site is run like a classified as page in a paper, but at no cost to run an ad. Item often posted include Bulk Juice/Wine, Equipment, Grapes, Help Wanted, Services, Vines, and Vineyards. Both ads selling and ads looking for items are allowed.



The New York Grape & Wine Classifieds website can be found [Here](#).

Learn how to create an account and/or post an ad [Here](#).

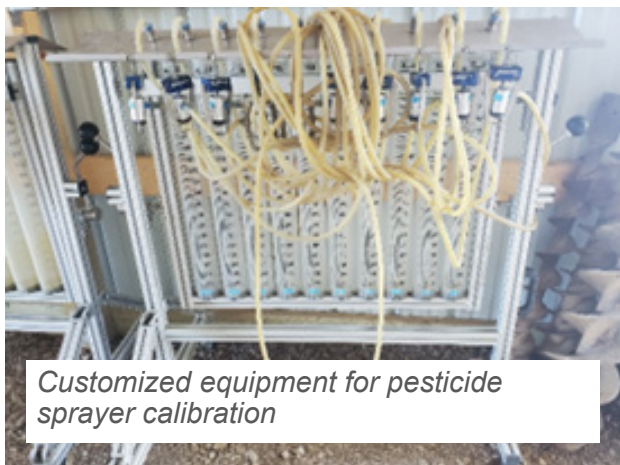
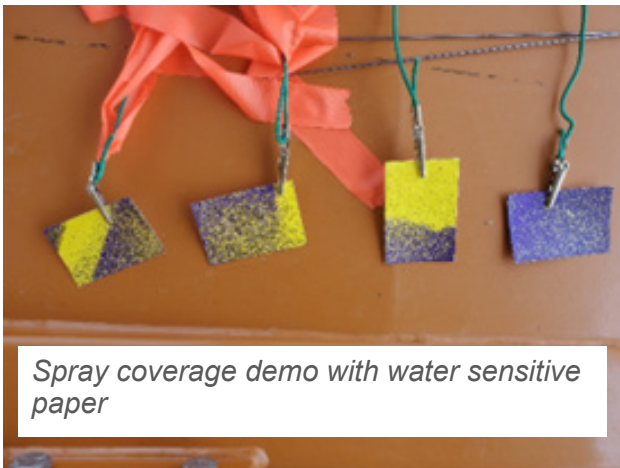
Meetings/Webinars:

- Field Rep Meeting – 1/10, 3/6
- PSU Grape and Wine Team Meeting 2/4
- SLF Summit – 3/11, 3/12, 3/13

Megan Luke-LERGP Penn State Extension, Viticulture & Tree Fruit Educator

Pesticide Sprayer Calibration

Calibration services and coverage demonstrations to growers in both NY and PA have started for the year. In March, I was able to attend a training session on advanced sprayer calibration practices and a demonstration of airflow within various vineyard canopy arrangements with Gwen Hoheisel of Washington State University and Alexa McDaniel of North Carolina State University. I will be able to expand my demonstrations to include more information on sprayer settings and methods for determining speed and nozzle selection this growing season.



Eight new growers and two repeat clients have signed up to receive onsite calibration of spray equipment for April and May. Services will begin once the weather stabilizes and the dewinterization of spray equipment commences.

NERME Award: Creating Active-Learning, Grab n' Go Pesticide Safety Education Modules and Toolkits

This grant was awarded to a group of Cornell Extension Specialists, including the LERGP. Our first meeting to discuss deliverables was held at CLEREL on March 17th. We will work collaboratively to develop short, hands-on, active-learning lesson plans and toolkits to teach pesticide safety and risk reduction practices to undertrained applicators in the Finger Lakes, western NY, and northwest PA for growers of multiple commodities. These Grab n' Go lesson plans will be taught as stand-alone topics at 10 long-established annual grower meetings. The lesson plans will be designed to be stacked together to create workshop-length modules around four themes: Personal Protective Equipment, Non-applicator & Environmental Safety, Math and Mixing, and Calibration & Sprayer Troubleshooting. We will teach each themed workshop twice. We anticipate reaching 235 people. 200 growers will increase understanding of pesticide safety practices, and at least 100 applicators will adopt new practices that reduce their health, legal, environmental, regulatory, or production risks.

Lake Erie Regional Grape Program (LERGP)

Cornell Cooperative Extension's Lake Erie Regional Grape Program (LERGP) is a NY and PA growers membership program. Renewal letters were sent out last quarter, and through additional speaking engagements promoting the LERGP benefits, we have maintained steady enrollment in PA.

Jennifer Philips Russo and I attended the Annual Spotted Lanternfly Summit, which was virtual this year, at the request of Penn State Extension and the Pennsylvania Dept of Agriculture. Additionally, I spoke at the PSU Master Gardener Conference on SLF. At the respective events, we presented the risks and concerns over SLF during mechanized grape harvesting in the Lake Erie Region. I presented the mechanical harvester data and LERGP updates and successes on March 19th at the Annual Erie Horticultural Society Banquet to 78 growers and their families.

Crop Updates were released biweekly via email during the winter months and will be weekly beginning in May. I have contributed six articles regarding new Environmental Protection Agency guidelines, label changes, and pesticide best practices. I presented these updates virtually at the February 11th Iowa Specialty Crops Conference (26 session attendees) and in person at the February 26th PSU Wine and Grape Industry Conference in State College (45 presentation attendees), PA, and on March 20th at the LERGP Winter Grape Grower Meeting at SUNY Fredonia. In addition to presenting team updates, I have been part of several working groups regarding the EPA's pesticide label update strategies and attended webinars with the Cornell teams (January 22nd, attendee/panelist with DEC, USDA) and the Penn State team (March 18th lead speaker, PDA, 34 registrants).

Kim Knappenberger- Viticulture and IPM Extension Support Specialist

Vineyard Improvement Program

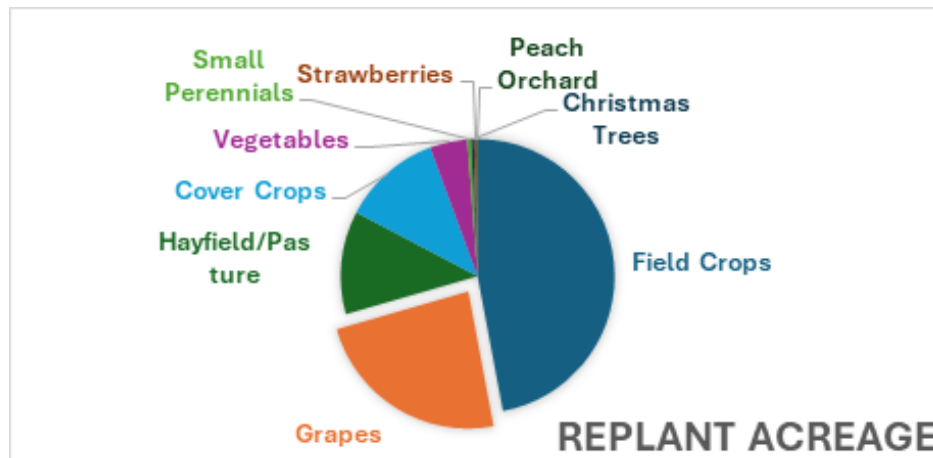
The Vineyard Improvement Program has officially ended with the end of this quarter. There were no new applicants to the program, and only one reimbursement completed. This brought the total finished projects/reimbursements to 50. The final total of the abandoned/unwanted Concord vineyards removed was 598.86 acres and the total reimbursements awarded was \$804,357.45.

All of the land was replanted and kept in agriculture which included field crops, grapes, hayfield, pasture, cover crops, vegetables, small perennials, strawberries, peaches and Christmas trees.

Six New York counties were represented in this program: Chautauqua, Erie, Niagara, Schuyler, Steuben and Cattaraugus.

We are excited about the opportunities that were afforded to the applicants to remove these potential pest sinks and reclaim the land for agricultural products that better suit their businesses.

VIP Replant Acgreage



NEWA

Firmware updates were rolled out this quarter to help remedy some of the outage issues we have been experiencing with some of our weather stations. So far East Ripley and Versailles have been updated and are performing well.

At the end of the quarter it looks like we are ready to start accumulating our growing season data with all of the stations so we can have models that represent what is happening here in the region.

I gave a talk at our 2025 Winter Growers Conference on NEWA basics including how to use it and the coverage in our area.

I continue to answer questions at the NEWA help desk and work as a key member to get stations onboarded to the network and help station owners trouble shoot when problems arise.

I also attended multiple meetings to stay informed of changes and updates on both the NEWA network and the various stations.

CAPS

I facilitated a meeting between the State Survey Coordinator from New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets and the survey participants from the other grape growing regions of New York State in anticipation of the 2025 growing season. This was the first meeting of its kind to ensure that all were informed of the proper methods and timings for the traps to be set and serviced, collection techniques, and updates to pests included in the survey. We were also joined by the coordinator of the Insect Diagnostic Laboratory who was able to inform of proper handling and shipping of samples to ensure the most probability of success in identification.



Lake Erie Regional Grape Program Specialists



Jennifer Phillips Russo-
LERGP Viticulture Specialist,
Team Lead



Andrew Holden-
LERGP Penn State Extension Business
Management Educator



Megan Luke-
LERGP Penn State Extension
Viticulture & Tree Fruit Educator



Kim Knappenberger- Viticulture and
IPM Extension Support Specialist

First Quarter 2025 totals:

Publications - LERGP Crop Updates (7)

Podcasts and You Tube video posts(0/ea) - weekly podcasts available on <http://lergp.com/podcasts>

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

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