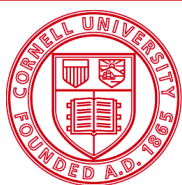




Lake Erie Regional Grape Program



Cornell University
Cooperative Extension



PennState Extension

CROP UPDATE SEPTEMBER 5, 2019



CLEREL harvester is ready to begin harvest season, Jennifer Russo, LERGP

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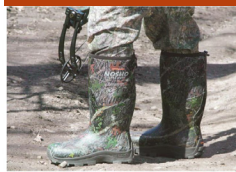
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Business Management

Kevin Martin, Penn State University, LERGP, Business Management Educator

Harvest Labor

Unemployment rate for the Lake Erie region has continued to fall to 4%. The historical average unemployment is right around 6% for our somewhat rural and rustbelt region. It has fallen from that level to 4% over the last two years. Growers may see a need to do a couple of things this harvest season, if they haven't already.

Pay more

NYS minimum wage will be \$11.80 this December. It wouldn't surprise me if harvest crews were making between \$15 and \$20 per hour. The nationwide shortage of truck drivers has alleviated somewhat, but pressure on wages for truck drivers is up even more than other sectors. If you don't have your core harvest crew set, make sure you're aware of these pay trends. Missing these trends might cause you to miss out on qualified workers or lose workers you already have. When unemployment is below 4.5%, pay alone is not an adequate recruitment tool. At these rates, finding qualified help takes more than money.

Hire Criminals

No, really. According to Society for Human Resources Management (SHRM). 65% of firms are hiring individuals with criminal records. This is a new trend to help fill the gap in labor rate participation and to find qualified and motivated individuals. HR professionals and managers agree; the employment history is more important to employee success than the criminal record. Misdemeanors and substance abuse related crimes represent the largest areas that companies have begun to over-look. Some hiring managers are also over-looking property related felonies. Most companies still continue to exclude those with records that include violent felonies.

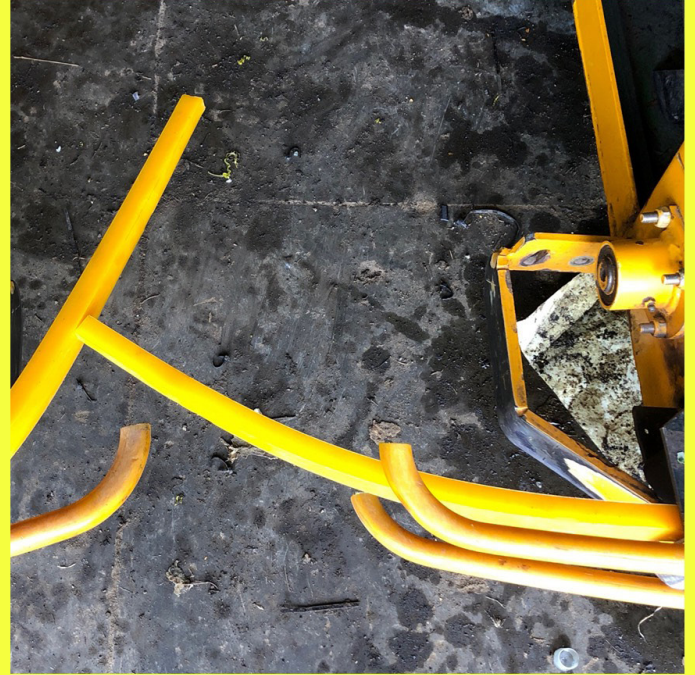
The largest risk to the organization is recidivism. If a repeat offense results in an interruption of labor availability, there can be an issue with hiring individuals. The preference toward solid work history, date of conviction and personal references can all help lower that risk. From what I've heard from both processors and growers, this risk isn't really a risk at all. Unless there is a willingness to be unconventional about hiring, the labor simply isn't there at all.

Eliminate Labor or Lower Expertise Required

No need for a lot of detail here. It's been a constant theme in this crop update and a constant focus in the industry for the last 60 years. MOG removers, larger equipment, bulk delivery and custom hire trucking are all ways growers have reduced the need for harvest labor or shifted that labor to outside companies that are better equipped to manage hard to find employees. Fork lift operation continues to be a challenge, which will be exacerbated by overtime rules next year. Bulk delivery significantly lowers the skill level required for harvest labor. On a personal note, in an effort to ease harvest operation, there is some work on a self-guided harvester. It is early days, so an update will follow after testing this harvest season. See attached pictures.

Custom Harvest Rates

If you have not recently increased your custom rate price, you'll need to do it next year. Custom harvest will be the primary driver of over-time pay based on the new farm labor bill in NY. Penalties for violations are severe. Particularly if you farm or operate across state lines, consider a payroll service. Online payroll services are virtually free when you take into account the forms they complete quarterly or annually that you're already paying an accountant to do. High service payroll companies, that are more locally based, cost more but provide more services. Think about what is right for you. If you stick with DIY I commend your attention to detail and caution you to continue to stay informed to remain in compliance and avoid fees, fines or even criminal charges.



IPM

Tim Weigle, NYSIPM, Cornell University, LERGP Team Leader

Do You Have Fruit Flies That Won't Die?

Tim Weigle

As you may have heard, fruit flies have been linked to the occurrence and spread of sour rot in a vineyard. If you have seen an increase in sour rot over the years, despite making insecticide applications to control fruit flies around harvest, I would like to hear from you. Greg Loeb, Cornell, is leading a project that is looking at potential resistance of fruit flies to different insecticides labeled against them.

If you have a vineyard with a history of sour rot despite multiple insecticide applications against fruit fly populations, we would like to hear from you. Participation in the project is extremely simple. All you need to do is contact us, show us where the vineyard is, and then we collect samples of the fruit flies present in that vineyard block.

If you are interested in the project please send me an email at thw4@cornell.edu or give me a call at 716.792.2800 x203. We are looking for 3 vineyards in the Lake Erie region to participate.

For more information on controlling fruit flies and sour rot, check out the articles by Hans Walter-Peterson and Greg Loeb in our next newsletter.

Topics Sought for 2020 LERGP Growers' Conference

While March 19, 2020 seems like a long ways off, the LERGP extension team is trying to get an agenda put together for the next LERGP growers Conference and we would like to hear from you. We start putting the conference together at this time of year to help ensure we can get the right speakers for the topics you are interested in. With the plethora of meetings these days, it doesn't take long for a good speaker's calendar to fill up.

If you have a topic that you think would be of interest to participants of the conference, or if it is something they need to hear but wouldn't come to a meeting specifically on that topic, send it along. If you know of a speaker who would be good at getting the message across, send that information along as well.

You can contact any member of the extension team with ideas.

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Kevin Martin kmm52@psu.edu

Andy Muza ajm4@psu.edu

Tim Weigle thw4@cornell.edu

Vineyard Improvement Program

Kim Knappenberger

We are into our second year of the Vineyard Improvement Program. This is a 5 year program set up by the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets through the Lake Erie Regional Grape Program that offers a reimbursement opportunity for Concord growers in the Southern Tier (+ Erie and Niagara counties) of New York state. The grants have been funded by the Southern Tier Agricultural Industry Enhancement Program.

This grant, as proposed by Governor Cuomo and Commissioner Ball, is intended to assist growers/ property owners in removing abandoned or under-producing Concord vineyards and replacing those vineyards with an agricultural commodity that might be better suited to their needs. Removing sources of pest and infection will help neighboring commercial vineyards by reducing the amount of inoculum present and reducing the inputs required to keep those vineyards “clean”.

To date there have been eleven applicants, with one already completing the process and receiving reimbursement. Those eleven applications account for 113.94 acres of Concord vineyards being removed. 66.47 acres of those removed will be replanted with grapes, 11.3 of which are intended to be Concord. The acreage per county are as follows: 6 applications from Chautauqua County account for 64.32 acres; 3 from Niagara County account for 39.92 acres; 1 from Steuben County accounts for 4 acres; and 1 from Schuyler County accounts for 5.7 acres.

If you own an abandoned or under-producing Concord vineyard and are interested in seeing what we can do to help, you can either go to our website at lergp.com/about-vip or email or call Kim (ksk76@cornell.edu or 798-2800 ext 209).

Just a reminder: if you do intend to use the program please do not pull the vineyard out prior to submitting the application. We will need to verify that it was a Concord vineyard in order for the program to be applicable.



Vineyard that is in poor health

NEWA – only as good as the data going into it!

NEWA is an amazing tool available to our growers, but it's only as good as the information that is fed into it. There are 23 weather stations throughout the Lake Erie Region that collect data. On occasion various things can go wrong with those stations that cause them to need some maintenance. We are notified daily whether or not the stations are transmitting data, but that does not indicate if the information is accurate.

The information that is collected is monitored so that issues can be corrected, but sometimes those problems go unnoticed. That's where you come in! If you are checking on a station and notice something that doesn't seem quite right, please email us! We have seen 2 stations recently that weren't collecting precipitation data, and it was just because the screen was dirty and needed to be cleaned; a 5 minute fix. Temperature, relative humidity, and leaf wetness sensors are also very important, and can be changed out as needed.

If you notice anything that doesn't seem right, please contact Kim at ksk76@cornell.edu.



Hail damaged rain bucket

Viticulture

Jennifer Russo, Viticulture Extension Specialist, LERGP

Vineyard Happenings

Harvest has begun in the Lake Erie region with some early season hybrids and Minnesota cold hardy varieties coming off the vine. The staff at the Cornell Lake Erie Research and Extension Laboratory are gearing up to pick the first grapes of the year next week to deliver Seyval to Walker's Fruit Basket in Forestville, NY.

This year at our research station, the official Concord Bloom Date, June 20, 2019, was six days later than the historical average. Veraison in Concord was officially called on August 26, 2019, at the Cornell Lake Erie Research and Extension Laboratory, making veraison four days later than historical average. We gained some days due to the warm, dry weather between bloom to veraison.

Early vineyard observations indicated that there were potentially large crops hanging. This prompted more grower interest in crop estimation procedures. Many of our grower meetings focused on crop estimation and the use of spatial data-driven maps to direct sampling efforts for more efficient estimates. Some of our early adopters of the Specialty Crop Research Initiative (SCRI) Efficient Vineyard Project were utilizing sensors and tools to direct their management practices with some implementing variable rate management this season.

Frequent heavy rains in the past month have provided growers relief from what looked to be a dry growing season. We are looking at favorable weather for continued ripening of the crop, with the exception of a slight chance of showers on Friday, as the 7-day forecast is partly sunny and an average of 72° Fahrenheit during day time hours.

To keep abreast with what is happening in the Lake Erie region, check out the Lake Erie Regional Grape Program Extension team's weekly podcasts at <http://lergp.com/podcasts/>. This week's podcast covers berry sampling techniques for capturing a representative sample for Brix monitoring.

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PA Update

Bryan Hed, Research Technologist, Lake Erie Grape Research and Extension Center

Weather: At our location by the lake, our August rainfall finished at 4.04", which is above our long-term average for the month. It also places us a bit ahead of average for the season (by about 2.5"). Growing degree accumulations for August finished at 640.7 (slightly above average for August), and we accumulated 2135 gdds by end of August (since April 1). This places us just a tad behind average for heat accumulation for the season. Our short-term forecast is dry but with somewhat below average temperatures over the next 3 days.

Diseases: Measurable rainfall on 6 of the past 9 days continues to fuel the threat of downy mildew on leaves of susceptible wine grape varieties. For susceptible varieties, it is absolutely essential to continue to scout your vineyards regularly for symptoms of this disease. Failure to control this disease can damage this year's crop (ripening stops) and next year's crop (unripe wood won't survive the winter). Be aware of pre-harvest intervals that limit your fungicide options (check out the table at the back of your NY & PA Pest Management Guidelines for Grapes).

For powdery mildew, here's sort of a repeat of last week's update: this year, juice grape production is all about keeping grape canopies as functional as possible to maximize your chances of getting that huge (or at least above average) crop to minimum sugar (or better) in an average or slightly below average season for ripening. Our most recent trials have indicated that copper/lime sprays do a pretty good job of maintaining Concord leaves clean of powdery mildew, if they're already clean. They will also do very well at controlling downy mildew on susceptible varieties like Niagara and Catawba. And, there are no issues with pathogen resistance to copper. On the other hand, a tank mix of the synthetics with a foliar fertilizer like harvestmore (or harvestmore alone) tends to slow the development of powdery mildew and help to manage the development of resistance. A material like Nutrol (with a surfactant) will likely do the same thing. However, none of these inputs will guarantee that you'll ripen that huge or bigger-than-average crop this year; they're only insurance policies designed to improve the odds in your favor, in spite of the weather.

Bunch rot is developing in many wine varieties across the belt, but especially those with compact clusters, like Vignoles and Pinot Gris/Noir. Botrytis specific fungicides can help manage bunch rots but will only be effective if you're spraying for bunch rots caused by Botrytis. Botrytis is often a problem during cool, wet ripening periods. However, in warm, wet harvest seasons, we also see a fair amount of sour rot caused by non-Botrytis fungi and bacteria that cannot be controlled with Botrytis specific fungicides. While fruit zone leaf removal can significantly reduce rot development (of all kinds) in these varieties, this cultural practice needs to be applied much earlier in the year, around or shortly after bloom to be most effective. On the other hand, Dr. Megan Hall, has developed some valuable information to show that controlling fruit flies (with insecticides) during this latter part of the ripening period (beginning around 15 brix) can significantly reduce sour rot development. Applying insecticides with sterilants or antimicrobials like Oxidate or Fracture can improve control above insecticides alone. This sour rot treatment strategy has gained momentum over the past few seasons and I think has served most wine grape growers well in years when sour rot is a problem. However, be aware of the fact that fruit flies reproduce rapidly and can develop resistance to insecticide chemical classes in short order. In fact it already appears to have happened at some locations in the East. Therefore, always rotate insecticide chemical classes when spraying for fruit fly/sour rot control. On the other hand, there are no resistance issues that I know of associated with the use of the antimicrobials.



INSURING GRAPES

NY, 2019

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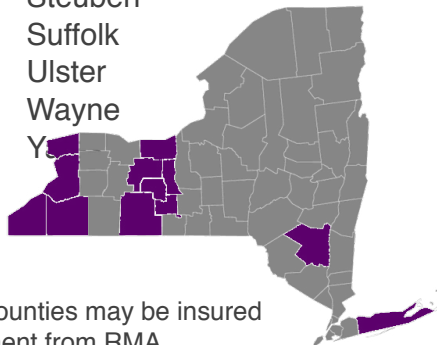
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- **Aug. 15, 2018:** Premium Billing Date
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NYS Grape Crop Insurance



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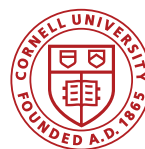
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