



Cornell Cooperative Extension
Finger Lakes Grape Program

Finger Lakes Grape Program Vineyard Update – December 21, 2020

Finally, the end of this bizarre, strange, terrible, tragic, unforgettable, divisive, Island-of-Misfit-Toys-MVP-Candidate of a year is close at hand. And while things won't magically be better come January 1, I know I'll be taking a little bit of comfort in the fact that 2020 will be behind us very soon.

So as we wrap up the year, and before we slide into the 2020 holidays, I wanted to throw out a few items in our final Vineyard Update of the year. Sorry that it doesn't look as professional as our usual ones – Brittany is on a well-deserved vacation this week, so you're stuck with my limited skills.

Winter Hardiness Monitoring

Our annual bud hardiness monitoring project will start up in January again. We will be sampling buds from four key varieties – Concord, Cayuga White, Riesling and Cabernet Franc (plus a couple of others) - from eight sites around the Finger Lakes every two weeks from January through March in order to track their winter hardiness. We will also be recording temperatures at each of those sites to see if there is the potential for bud damage based on the lab results that we see. The bud hardiness results will be published on the project website, <https://grapesandwine.cals.cornell.edu/extension/bud-hardiness-data/>, along with graphs comparing those readings with the temperatures for each combination of site and variety. If the air temperature reaches the point where our testing indicates the potential for significant damage (~50%), we will alert growers about this. Growers should be checking their own buds before pruning to see if it is necessary to make any adjustments to their pruning (i.e., how many buds to retain per vine) to compensate for bud loss.

You can learn some more about how we do this sampling and how we test them in the lab [in this video we produced several years ago](#).

Survey on Novel Weed Management Practices (yes, we know – another survey)

Weeds can be a significant problem in berries, tree fruits, tree nuts, and vine crops (e.g. grapes, hops, etc.) especially after transplanting and during flowering and fruit and nut set. Herbicides are a primary tool for managing weeds, even though the evolution of herbicide resistance has limited the utility of many products and off-target movement can sometimes result in damage to trunks, shoots, leaves and flowers. Many growers are transitioning to organic systems to address changes in consumer preferences or satisfy the requirements set in place to enter export markets.

Perennial cropping systems are exploring technologies such as automated harvesters and pruners, to reduce labor demands, and canopy sensing sprayers, to minimize the amounts of crop protection chemicals applied to shrubs, trees, and vines. Novel weed control tools that eliminate or reduce the

need for herbicides are actively being developed for and marketed in the agriculture and horticulture industries. These new technologies could begin to play an increasingly large role in future crop production, particularly in high-value specialty crops that 1) have limited herbicide options, 2) are sensitive to herbicide injury, and 3) are heavily reliant on a labor market that is simultaneously growing more scarce and more expensive.

A team of weed scientists from UC Davis, Oregon State University, and Cornell are asking berry, tree fruit, tree nut, and vine crop growers to take 5 to 10 minutes and answer this short and anonymous survey (link below) about your current weed management practices and your interest in novel technologies, like vision-guided sprayers and cultivators, and electric, steam, and pressurized water weeders. This will help us plan research and extension projects that will address stakeholder concerns regarding the future of weed management.

There's always a chance that we forgot to include some amazing tools that are emerging on the horizon; please feel free to e-mail Lynn Sosnoskie at lms438@cornell.edu and let her know what you think the future of weed control will look like.

Survey link: https://cornell.ca1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_bEpfAijoP7puQDP

Get Ready for Sick Leave

Libby Eiholzer, Northwest NY Dairy, Livestock and Field Crops Team

Beginning January 1, 2021, NY employers are required to provide sick leave to their employees. The following article describes some of the requirements of the new law. More information on this and other recent changes to NY farm labor laws can be found on the Ag Workforce Development website at <https://agworkforce.cals.cornell.edu/regulations/2019-new-york-flflpa-labor-law-changes/>.

In 2020, New York State law changed to require paid sick leave on an annual basis. This includes private sector employers, like farms. The amount and type of sick leave depends on farm size and income, see *the table below*. Employers are required to start offering sick leave on January 1, 2021, but were required to begin accruing hours of sick leave on September 30, 2020. All employees must accrue sick leave at a rate no lower than 1 hour of sick leave per every 30 hours worked. The employer can allow accrual of more sick leave once the minimum threshold is met (either 40 or 56 hours, depending on the business), but this is not required. This policy covers all employees including full time, part time, seasonal, and youth.



Employees can use sick leave for “mental or physical illness, injury or health condition” as well as for safe leave. NYSDOL defines safe leave as when the employee or a member of their family has been the victim of “domestic violence, family offense, sexual offense, stalking, or human trafficking.” These quotes come directly from the NYS Department of Labor, and I would encourage you to read them in full. The safe leave especially is quite detailed and perhaps not what you might expect.

Employees simply need to make a written or oral request to their employer in order to use leave.

Employers can choose to require that leave be used in increments, but the increment can't be greater than 4 hours. Employers can limit the amount of leave that employees can use in one year to the maximum that the employee can earn in a year (either 40 or 56 hours). Realistically this could mean that an employee maintains a leave balance in excess of what he or she can use within one year. If the employer chooses to set any limitations on the use of leave, employers must notify the employees in writing before they earn leave.

Applying the New Policy on Your Farm

If you already have a policy for sick leave and/or vacation, review it carefully. If your current policy meets or exceeds the requirements of **accrual, carryover and use**, then you should be all set. However, most farms will have to make some adjustments to stay within the law. Here are a few scenarios commonly seen on farm and some things to take into consideration.

Some farms require employees to work for a certain period before earning vacation pay (perhaps six months or a year). However, according to NYS law, employees are now entitled to begin accruing sick leave as soon as they start.

A common policy is to award vacation/sick leave at the beginning of the year (January 1, or at the beginning of another 12-month period). That is an option under the new law, and may be appealing to employers who would rather just award the sick leave rather than keeping track of accruals. However, once given, employers can't later revoke sick leave if the employee works less than expected.

Many farms pay out unused vacation at the end of the year. This is not permitted with the new sick leave policy. Any unused sick leave hours must be rolled over to the next year. NYS DOL explains that this is so employees will have access to leave at the beginning of the year. If paying out unused vacation is a policy you really want to continue, you could consider keeping sick leave and vacation separate, though it is one more thing to keep track of.

If employers choose to have employees accrue sick leave as it is earned, it will be important to track this regularly and stop accrual of additional sick leave when the minimum accrual for a year is met.

For part-time employees, you will want to either track each time a new 30 hours is reached and award another sick day or provide a prorated amount of sick leave each week until the employee has accrued the amount of leave they are entitled to for the year.

Find full details on the law on the NYS DOL website: <https://www.ny.gov/new-york-paid-sick-leave/new-york-paid-sick-leave>. The FAQ section at the end is particularly helpful in answering questions that you may have.

Additional articles on this topic can be found on the [Ag Workforce Journal](#).

Number of Employees	Sick Leave Requirements
0-4	If net income is \$1 million or less in the previous tax year, the employer is required to provide up to 40 hours of unpaid sick leave per calendar year.
0-4	If net income is greater than \$1 million in the previous tax year, the employer is required to provide up to 40 hours of paid sick leave per calendar year.
5-99	Up to 40 hours of paid sick leave per calendar year.
100+	Up to 56 hours of paid sick leave per calendar year.

Barn Damage Due to Winter Storm? Let CCE EDEN Know!

Due to the recent heavy snowfall event, particularly in the southern portion of New York, some areas with high snowfall amounts have experienced barn collapse, structure failure, etc. [CCE NY EDEN](#) (Extension Disaster Education Network) is working with the Department of Ag & Markets and NY State Farm Bureau to document these instances and to plan for potential relief opportunities. If you have, or know of, snow-related barn damage, please send any reports (details appreciated, including contact info, photos, etc.) to disaster@cornell.edu.

The EDEN program has important winter weather information, including resources on caring for barn and house roofs, at <https://eden.cce.cornell.edu/natural-hazards/winter-storms/>.

Upcoming Events

Cornell AgriTech
New York State Agricultural Experiment Station

 **PennState Extension**

Eastern Viticulture and Enology Forum

A webinar series from Penn State and Cornell for Eastern Growers and Winemakers.

Grapevine Nutrition: Nutrient Requirements, Tissue Tests, and Mycorrhizae



Presenter: Paul Schreiner, *Plant Physiologist, USDA Agricultural Research Service, Horticultural Crops Research, Corvallis, OR.*

To be covered: This live webinar will review the basics of plant nutrition and the tissue tests used to assess the nutrient status of grapevines. There will be research presented on the N, P, and K requirements of Pinot noir and corresponding tissue test values needed to achieve production goals. Lastly, we will discuss the management of mycorrhizal fungi in vineyards.

When: Wednesday, January 20, 2021 (3:00 PM - 4:00 PM ET)

To register: <https://extension.psu.edu/grapevine-nutrition-nutrient-requirements-tissue-tests-and-mycorrhizae>

Webinars are offered at no charge, but registration is required.

COVID-19 Resources

Need information? View the following Cornell CALS and CCE Resource Pages Updated Regularly

General Questions & Links:

<https://eden.cce.cornell.edu/>

Food Production, Processing & Safety Questions:

<https://institutefforfoodsafety.cornell.edu/coronavirus-covid-19/>

Employment & Agricultural Workforce Questions:

<http://agworkforce.cals.cornell.edu/>

Cornell Small Farms Resiliency Resources:

<https://smallfarms.cornell.edu/resources/farm-resilience/>

Financial & Mental Health Resources for Farmers:

<https://www.nyfarmnet.org/>

Cornell Farmworker Program

www.farmworkers.cornell.edu

www.trabajadores.cornell.edu (en espanol)

Finger Lakes Grape Program Advisory Committee

Eric Amberg- Grafted Grapevine Nursery

Bill Dalrymple- Dalrymple Farm

Matt Doyle- Doyle Vineyard Management

Eileen Farnan- Barrington Cellars

Chris Gerling- Cornell University Extension

Luke Haggerty- Constellation Brands

Tina Hazlitt- Sawmill Creek Vineyards

Cameron Hosmer- Hosmer Winery

T.J. Brahm – Randall Standish Vineyards

Harry Humphreys- Overlook Farms

Gregg McConnell- Farm Credit East

Herm Young– Young Sommer Winery

John Santos- Hazlitt 1852 Vineyards

Steve Sklenar– Sklenar Vineyards

Justine Vanden Heuvel- Cornell University

Peter Weis – Weis Vineyards

Kim Marconi – Three Brothers Wineries & Estates

Cornell University Cooperative Extension provides equal program and employment opportunities. CCE does not endorse or recommend any specific product or service. This program is solely intended to educate consumers about their choices. Contact CCE if you have any special needs such as visual, hearing or mobility impairments.

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.