



CROP UPDATE February 11, 2021

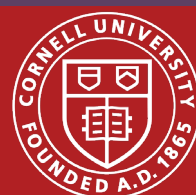
Cornell Cooperative Extension
Lake Erie Regional Grape Program



PennState Extension

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- **Labor Costs- Kevin Martin**
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The Lake Erie Regional Grape Program is a Cornell Cooperative Extension partnership between Cornell University and the Cornell Cooperative Extensions in Chautauqua, Erie and Niagara county NY and in Erie County PA.

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Business Management

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

Labor Costs

Higher unemployment has not provided any relief to local agriculture to provide any increase in available labor supply. While the last recession gave local opportunities to recruit full time help, this time around migrant and full time labor costs continue to rise.

Immigration policy, rising minimum wage, farm labor protection, COVID labor rules and paid sick time have all increased the cost of labor. If labor prices are not burdensome in NYS, the most likely reason is the farm is not in compliance with some or many of these new rules.

In PA, the total cost of labor remains substantially lower. Actual hourly rates have continued to rise at a similar pace. PA has avoided labor protections, some COVID rules and paid sick time that increase the cost of benefits associated with employment. Early studies in 2010 suggested that NYS minimum wage did not impact higher wages in PA border counties. More recent studies suggest that border counties in certain industries do see higher wages when a neighboring state increases the minimum wage. Whatever the cause, hourly rates continue to rise.

Piece-rate pruning labor now often exceeds a rate of \$.34 per vine. Benefits and costs rates for PA are estimated at 17% for large farms and 11% for small farms. Larger farms typically process payroll more efficiently but are not exempt from unemployment. So in PA large farms are paying \$.40 per vine.

NY benefit rates do not vary substantially based on farm size. Piece-rate labor is higher, perhaps averaging \$.36 per vine. Some benefits can be managed, while others cannot. Some farmers are able to require a day of rest, while others have struggled implementing and enforcing a day of rest. Total cost for pruning with benefits varies from \$.43 - \$.46 per vine.

Benefits such as PFL, sick-time and over-time tend to raise the cost of non-seasonal labor significantly more than pruning labor. Costs in that area have risen at least 25% in the last 3 years. Anecdotal review of tax returns shows higher increases. Reducing the cost of hourly labor has been used to justify capital investment, multi-row equipment and changes in operational strategy.

Growers should be reviewing vineyard tasks and looking to increase efficiency even if it requires substantial capital investment. While fixed costs should generally be avoided, larger growers should favorably view increases in fixed cost (such as debt service) that decrease labor expenses. Not only do some investments offer rapid break even returns, it is difficult to forecast the future price of labor. It is easy to state that costs will continue to rise but we do not know if it will be 5% per year or 18%. To the extent that fixed capital eliminates labor costs, future costs are known.

Some growers are shifting hourly paid labor activities to unpaid owner activities. It's not that our 60-year-old farmers found another gear and can work 100 hours a week all of a sudden. No, the play here is to increase the number of individuals with an ownership interest. This too can be expensive but at least the costs are known for a number of years. Laborers with an ownership interest might be more productive and are also exempt from minimum wage and overtime rules (assuming the ownership is meaningful). This kind of arrangement also allows an older grower to pay a key staff member or two with equity rather than cash.

Viticulture

Jennifer Russo, Viticulture Extension Specialist, LERGP

February 5, 2021 Bud Hardiness Data

Data collection continues for Evaluating Cropping Level Effects on Bud Hardiness of three varieties, Concord, Riesling, and Vignoles. The data is uploaded on our LERGP website in a timely matter. Just to refresh, the LTE 50 is the critical temperature that 50% of the buds die on that particular date.

Table 1. Lethal Temperature Exotherm (LTE) 50 data for Cropping Level Bud Hardiness Trials

| Date | Treatment | LTE 50 °F |
|----------|--------------------------------------|-----------|
| 2/5/2021 | Concord High | -14.37 |
| | Concord Low | -16.56 |
| | Riesling 15 bud Cane | -9.29 |
| | Riesling 5 bud Spur | -9.15 |
| | Riesling 2 bud Spur | -11.36 |
| | Riesling Control | -9.29 |
| | Riesling High Crop/Early Drop | -7.02 |
| | Riesling High Crop/Mid-season Drop | -8.61 |
| | Riesling High Crop/Late Season Drop | -11.61 |
| | Riesling Medium Crop/Early Drop | -11.56 |
| | Riesling Medium Crop/Mid-season Drop | -11.87 |
| | Riesling Medium Crop/Late Drop | -7.51 |
| | Riesling Low Crop/Early Drop | -5.19 |
| | Riesling Low Crop/Mid-season Drop | -12.39 |
| | Riesling Low Crop/Late Drop | -9.02 |
| | Vignoles High Crop/Early Drop | -12.82 |
| | Vignoles High Crop/Mid-season Drop | -11.42 |
| | Vignoles High Crop/Late Season Drop | -15.36 |
| | Vignoles Medium Crop/Early Drop | -9.76 |
| | Vignoles Medium Crop/Mid-season Drop | -11.76 |
| | Vignoles Medium Crop/Late Drop | -8.41 |
| | Vignoles Low Crop/Early Drop | -13.61 |
| | Vignoles Low Crop/Mid-season Drop | -17.32 |
| | Vignoles Low Crop/Late Drop | -16.38 |

Concord Grape Survey

I have been contacted by Miguel I. Gómez, Director Food Industry Management Program, at the Dyson School of Applied Economics and Management, Cornell SC Johnson College of Business in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences. He is working on a project focusing on the economic future of the concord grape sector in New York State.

They are working on a project funded by the New York Department of Agriculture & Markets to identify market opportunities for alternative products based on concord grapes. The study aims to benefit concord growers by providing information on new value-added processes and products based on

concord grapes. As part of the project, they hope to receive insights from concord grape growers regarding current production and marketing challenges and growers' responses to different market conditions. They designed a short mobile-based survey and hoped to get responses from growers. This survey is part of the larger project aiming at increasing profitability and market demand for concord grapes. Unfortunately, they have received very few responses, and solicited our help.

Please take a few moments to fill out this survey in effects to help our Concord industry, your response is greatly appreciated:

https://cornell.ca1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_5opYg0ELguGLaAJ



**Need help with pruning? Thinning, suckering, and tying?
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Pesticide Online Recertification Credits

I have received a few calls from growers looking for pesticide recertification credits. As you know in New York State, due to the pandemic, your license entered into a grace period last year. That grace period has ended. There are a few online opportunities available for NYS pesticide applicators to take your time and recertify your credits with the following list of courses (see Table 2 below). Each course name is a link that you may click on and the corresponding credit amount and categories are listed. Andy Muza provided a list for PA growers in our last crop update as well. Many thanks to the Pesticide Management Education Program (PMEP) and the NYS Integrated Pest Management Program (NYS IPM) for compiling this list for us.

Approved Online Recertification Training Courses for NEW YORK 2021

New York Course numbers and Credits (1 credit is equal to 1 hour of training)

Table 2. Approved Online Recertification Training Courses for NEW YORK 2021

| Course Name | Course Number | Credits | Category(ies) |
|--|---------------|---------|--|
| <u>Module 4: Toxicity of Pesticides</u> | NY-21-412039 | 1 | Core - all |
| <u>Module 6: Ecology and Environment</u> | NY-21-412040 | 1 | Core - all |
| <u>Module 7: Safety Precautions with Pesticides</u> | NY-21-412041 | 1 | Core - all |
| <u>Module 8: Personal Protection</u> | NY-21-412042 | 1.25 | Core - all |
| <u>Module 20: Weatherwise Application</u> | NY-21-412036 | 0.5 | Core - all |
| <u>Module 21: Pesticide Disposal</u> | NY-21-412037 | 0.5 | Core - all |
| <u>Module 22: Pesticide Storage</u> | NY-21-412038 | 0.75 | Core - all |
| <u>Asian Soybean Aphid Integrated Pest Management on Soybeans</u> | NY-21-412022 | 1 | 1a, 10, 21, 23 |
| <u>Beating Phytophthora Blight</u> | NY-21-412023 | 1 | 1a, 9, 10, 23, 24 |
| <u>Bed Bugs Part 1 - Introduction to Bed Bugs and Their Behavior</u> | NY-21-412024 | 0.75 | 1b, 7a, 8, 10 |
| <u>Bed Bugs Part 2 - Inspection</u> | NY-21-412025 | 1 | 7a, 8, 10 |
| <u>Bed Bugs Part 3 - Integrated Management</u> | NY-21-412026 | 1 | 7a, 8, 10 |
| <u>Current Status of Herbicide Resistance in Weeds</u> | NY-21-412027 | 0.5 | 1a, 2, 3a, 3b, 5a, 6a, 9, 10, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25 |
| <u>Ecological Weed Management</u> | NY-21-412028 | 1 | 1a, 3a, 10, 21, 22, 23, 25 |
| <u>Effective Spraying with Backpack Sprayers</u> | NY-21-412029 | 1.5 | 1a, 3a, 3b, 6a, 9, 10, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25 |
| <u>Effective Spraying with Boom Sprayers</u> | NY-21-412030 | 1.5 | 1a, 3a, 3b, 6a, 9, 10, 21, 22, 23, 25 |
| <u>Fly Control on the Dairy: Barn Fly IPM</u> | NY-21-412055 | 1.25 | 1b, 10, 31 |
| <u>How Herbicides Work</u> | NY-21-412031 | 1 | 1a, 2, 3a, 3b, 5a, 6a, 9, 10, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25 |
| <u>Implementing NEWA into a Vineyard IPM Strategy</u> | NY-21-412061 | 1 | 1a, 22 |

| Course Name | Course Number | Credits | Category(ies) |
|---|----------------------|----------------|--|
| <u>Insect Biocontrol</u> | NY-21-412032 | 1 | 1a, 2, 3a, 3b, 9, 10, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25 |
| <u>Integrated Pest Management for Insect Pests on Field Corn</u> | NY-21-412056 | 1 | 1a, 10, 21, 23 |
| <u>Integrated Tick Management</u> | NY-21-412058 | 1.25 | 3a, 3b, 7a, 8 |
| <u>Introduction to Developing an IPM Strategy</u> | NY-21-412033 | 1 | 1a, 2, 3a, 9, 10, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25 |
| <u>Introduction to NEWA & Its Use In IPM</u> | NY-21-412034 | 1 | 1a, 2, 3a, 10, 21, 22, 23, 25 |
| <u>IPM for Foliar Diseases of Soybeans</u> | NY-21-412052 | 1 | 1a, 10, 21, 23 |
| <u>Management of Grape Berry Moth</u> | NY-21-412060 | 1 | 1a, 22 |
| <u>Mechanical Weed Management</u> | NY-21-412035 | 1.25 | 1a, 10, 21, 22, 23 |
| <u>Nozzle Selection & Calibration for Orchard Canopy Spraying</u> | NY-21-412043 | 1 | 1a, 10, 22 |
| <u>Nozzle Selection & Calibration for Vineyard Canopy Spraying</u> | NY-21-412044 | 1 | 1a, 10, 22 |
| <u>Pasture Fly Management on the Dairy</u> | NY-21-412054 | 1.25 | 1b, 10, 31 |
| <u>Principles of Managing Herbicide Resistance</u> | NY-21-412045 | 1 | 1a, 2, 3a, 3b, 5a, 6a, 9, 10, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25 |
| <u>Protecting Water from Pesticide Pollution</u> | NY-21-412053 | 1.5 | Core-all |
| <u>Scouting After a Herbicide Application & Confirming Herbicide Resistance</u> | NY-21-412046 | 1 | 1a, 2, 3a, 3b, 5a, 6a, 9, 10, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25 |
| <u>Scouting Basics – How's and Why's</u> | NY-21-412047 | 1 | 1a, 2, 3a, 9, 10, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25 |
| <u>Spotted Lanternfly - Understanding its Ecology and the Threat</u> | NY-21-412059 | 1 or 0.5 | 1 credit for 1a, 2, 3a, 9, 10, 22, 25; 0.5 credit for 6a |
| <u>Swede Midge Biology and Management</u> | NY-21-412048 | 1 | 1a, 10, 23 |
| <u>Sweet Corn IPM</u> | NY-21-412049 | 1 | 1a, 10, 23 |
| <u>Weed Suppressive Groundcovers</u> | NY-21-412050 | 0.75 | 1a, 3a, 3b, 6a, 10, 24, 25 |
| <u>What is Herbicide Resistance?</u> | NY-21-412051 | 1 | 1a, 2, 3a, 3b, 5a, 6a, 9, 10, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25 |
| <u>Wild Bees, Farms, and Pesticides</u> | NY-21-412057 | 0.75 | 1a, 3a, 3b, 9, 10, 21, 22, 23, 25 |

Update to reaching you via text messaging

We are so excited and pleased that many of you responded to the survey and provided your text number. Unfortunately the program we are currently using requires us to also know the carrier so we can add the appropriate suffix to the bulk text requirements.

If you have previously supplied your text, please revisit this link to add your carrier information.

If you have not yet taken the survey, please take a minute to do so. We don't want you to miss out on any information that we send through this mode.

THANK YOU!

[Text me please!](#)



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[Cornell Cooperative Extension website:](#)

[Cornell CALS Veraison to Harvest Newsletter:](#)

[Efficient Vineyard:](#)

[Appellation Cornell Newsletter:](#)

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://instituteforfoodsafety.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)

