



Winter Grower Conference  
class session-  
March 16, 2023  
Kim Knappenberger

## CROP UPDATE March 23, 2023

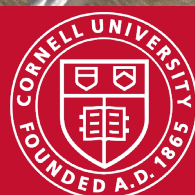


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## In this copy:

**In the Vineyard, Winter Grower Conference, New Hires, Farewells-**Jennifer Phillips Russo- [page 6](#)

**NEWA, VIP-**Kim Knappenberger- [page 11](#)

**PA Update-** Megan Luke- [page 13](#)



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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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# Viticulture

Jennifer Russo, Viticulture Extension Specialist, LERGP

## In the Vineyard

It seems appropriate to discuss change as we enter spring. The Lake Erie Regional Grape Program is very excited to announce that two of the vacant positions have been successfully filled this season. Below is the announcement for Dr. German Vargas, the New York State Grape Integrated Pest Management Coordinator and Megan Luke, our new Penn State University Educator, will introduce herself in this Crop Update as well.

The New York State Integrated Pest Management Program is pleased to announce the appointment of Germán Vargas as its first grape IPM coordinator.



*Photo 1 Dr. German Vargas - NYS Grape IPM Coordinator*

As a part of the third largest wine-producing state in the nation, New York grape growers work nearly 35,000 acres, producing 128,000 tons of juice grapes, 57,000 tons of wine grapes, and 2,000 tons of table grapes each year. In the new role, Vargas will grow and sustain the state's booming grape industry by working collaboratively, across disciplines, and with a variety of stakeholders to develop, demonstrate and guide IPM implementation efforts.

"The New York State Integrated Pest Management Program has long offered research, extension, outreach, and practical guidance to the grape industry, and we are tremendously grateful to state officials for supporting a position dedicated to serving wine growers and producers statewide," Calixto said. "We are tremendously excited to welcome Germán to the NYSIPM team and know he will be an incredible asset to our team and the Empire State grape industry.

A native of Colombia, Vargas is an award-winning entomologist with over 40 publications including peer-reviewed and extension. He has a Ph.D. from Kansas State University and most recently served as a post-doctoral research associate at the University of Florida's Tropical Research and Education Center, where he worked to develop a comprehensive, integrated pest management plan for the hibiscus bud weevil.

Vargas' position will be based out of the Cornell Lake Erie Research and Extension Laboratory in Portland, NY, beginning June 20, 2023 (Written March 15, 2023, By Carrie Carmenatty).



As we welcome new members, we are saddened to see another member go. This past week, we 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.



Kevin's work at LERGP focused on improving profitability and other financial goals, like succession planning and risk management. The relationship between yield and profitability has been persistent throughout the history of production. He recently helped bring resources to combat labor issues. Working together as a team, with a focus on sustainable practices for profitability, Kevin helped our growers continue to be successful. Thank you for your work.

*Photo 2. Kevin Martin, PSU Business Management Specialist*

## 2023 Winter Grower Conference

The Lake Erie Regional Grape Program is a regional extension program of Cornell Cooperative Extension serving the grape and wine industry of Lake Erie.

The Lake Erie Regional Grape Program provides unbiased, research-based information to the region's grape growers in areas including vineyard and pest management practices, new vineyard establishment, farm business management, marketing and business development and more as a means of supporting the industry's growth and long-term sustainability. This information is distributed to growers by a variety of means, including printed and electronic communications, field meetings and workshops, and an annual winter conference.

Grape growers are invited to [enroll in the Lake Erie Regional Grape Program](http://lergp.cce.cornell.edu/index.php) so that they may receive important and timely information through a wide variety of means to help produce the best crop possible, as efficiently as possible. Visit the Lake Erie Regional Grape Program online at: <http://lergp.cce.cornell.edu/index.php>

*The Lake Erie Regional Grape Program is supported, in part, by five county Cornell Cooperative Extensions including: Cattaraugus, Chautauqua, Erie and Niagara Counties in New York and Erie County in Pennsylvania.*



We had a very successful conference this year attended by over 100 people. This year's presenters provided research-based information aligned with LERGP's mission and were a direct result of our advisory committee's suggestions for content. In addition to the informative sessions, new faculty from both, Cornell University and Penn State University, made program presentations and had the opportunity to talk with growers in-person. Faculty members pressed upon the importance of communication of grower needs to help formulate their program's objectives. They were willing to listen to your needs and design research and educational materials in response.



It was a great opportunity to have grower voices heard. The conference also provided a great opportunity at the vendor show with many tables for growers to stop and visit to get information and set up meetings.

As a result of this conference, some of our presenters will be providing more detail on their presentations per grower requests. You will see portions of the talks in future Crop Updates and Podcasts. We implore you to become a part of our advisory committee to impact our research, programing, and educational outreach efforts. Thank you to everyone who helped make this 2023 Winter Grower Conference a success.



*Photo 3. Dr. Jason Londo, Cornell University Plant Physiologist*



*Photo 4. Dr. Flor Acevedo, Penn State University Entomologist*



*Photo 5. Dr. Alejandro Calixto, Director of NSY IPM*

The Lake Erie Regional Grape Program worked in collaboration with New York State Department of Environmental Conservation to hold our second Pesticide Applicator Prep Course for those looking to get certified for their pesticide applicator license. The course also served as CORE credits for NYS applicators. The turnout this year was twice as large as last year and we are proud to be able to offer this opportunity to our grower stakeholders.



*Photo 1. NYSDEC Pesticide Applicator Course*

## **Business Management**

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 looking at the Position Description and going through the process to get it approved through PSU Human Resources. Once that happens, we will get it posted on the appropriate websites to begin accepting applications.

We would like to take this opportunity to reach out to our grower base for your input regarding what business management strategies are most important to you. It is our hope to use your input as a general guide for the successful candidate to reference when designing their program objectives. Please send your suggestions to Jennifer Phillips Russo, LERGP Team Leader, at [jjr268@cornell.edu](mailto:jjr268@cornell.edu).

Jennifer has reached out to other Cornell Business Management Specialists and Dr. Richard Stup, Agricultural Workforce Specialist, Horticulture Section Cornell Cooperative Extension, to collaborate with in the interim for important business updates.

For example, Dr. Stup sent along the email with the information below:



Hello Cornell Colleagues!

Today we launched a follow up survey in our multi-year research effort to support farm employers and understand how the difficult labor situation is affecting New York farms. This survey is for wide distribution online to New York farms. Please share widely and prominently in your newsletters and email distributions. I am happy to answer any questions you might have. In addition to the direct link below the survey can also be found prominently at [agworkforce.cals.cornell.edu](http://agworkforce.cals.cornell.edu).

Thanks for your support!

Rich

### **Farm Employer Input Needed! NY Farm Labor in Transition Survey**

New York farm employers are navigating enormous changes in farm labor markets and regulations in recent years. It is critical for farm managers and decision-makers to have accurate and up-to-date information about the farm workforce. The [NY Farm Labor in Transition Survey](http://agworkforce.cals.cornell.edu) collects farm managers' perspectives on these important issues. Please take about 20-30 minutes of your time to include your response as a NY farm employer. All data will be kept confidential, results will only be reported as group data, and no personally identifiable data will be reported. Respondents will receive a summary of the results.

Most of the survey can be completed with information that you have in mind, but please be prepared by assembling the following data from your payroll records:

1. The number of full-time, part-time, seasonal, and H-2A positions you employed in 2021 and 2022.
2. Total **regular** hours worked by all of your hired employees in 2021 and 2022.
3. Total **overtime** hours worked by all of your hired employees in 2021 and 2022.
4. Number of positions filled by owners and unpaid family members, and hours worked by them, in 2021 and 2022.
5. Number of employees who left voluntarily or were fired in 2021 and 2022.
- 6.

Access the survey here: [NY Farm Labor in Transition Survey](http://agworkforce.cals.cornell.edu). Please complete only one time per farm business.

Thanks for participating!

Rich

**Richard Stup, Ph.D.**

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# Updates and Information

Kimberly Knappenberger, Viticulture Assistant, LERGP

## NEWA

Great news! The Brant station is back up and collecting data! It can even be found on [newa.cornell.edu](http://newa.cornell.edu) with actual data as of Wednesday, March 22<sup>nd</sup>. The wind sensor was faulty and took out the rest of the sensors with it. We are currently waiting for the new anemometer to arrive, and that should be installed some time next week – shipping and weather permitting!

*Figure 1 Brant station without the anemometer*



## VIP

We are excited to let you know that the extension for the Vineyard Improvement Program is officially approved! The grant will term on March 31, 2025, so we have 2 more years to finish projects that are already started and to get more projects done. This extension is for complete removal of Concord vineyards that are at least 1 acre. As a reminder this is for Concord acreage in New York State in Allegany, Broome, Cattaraugus, Chautauqua, Chemung, Chenango, Delaware, Erie, Niagara, Steuben, Schuyler, Tompkins, and Tioga Counties. The vineyards can be dead or alive, but we do need proof that they are/were Concord – this could include old contracts, hauling slips if it specifies that the grapes are Concord from that address, confirmation from a processor or custom harvester that used to accept the grapes or work that particular block.

This grant reimburses the applicant 50% of removal costs up to \$1,500 per acre, and 25% of replant costs (for eligible plantings) up to \$1,500 for a total possible of \$3,000 per acre. Each eligible project can not exceed

\$50,000. To date we have had 44 applicants – 24 have completed projects and have been reimbursed a combined total of \$414,870.

To learn more you can visit the website at [lergp.com](http://lergp.com) and click on the purple button. When you are ready the application is also on that website. If you have questions please contact Kim at [ksk76@cornell.edu](mailto:ksk76@cornell.edu) or call 716-792-2800 ext 209.





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# PA Update

Megan Luke, Penn State Extension Viticulture and Tree Fruit Educator

## PA Update

On the Pennsylvania side, I would like to take this opportunity to introduce myself as the new Penn State Extension Viticulture and Tree Fruit educator. My name is Megan Luke, I am a Chautauqua County NY native; recently moved back to the area after 15 years in Northern California. I hold a Bachelor of Science in Agriculture Science and a Master of Science in Interdisciplinary Studies: Integrated Pest Management and Agroecology. I've spent my career working in diverse perennial cropping systems in commercial settings and have knowledge of both conventional and organic practices. Focuses of my past research include pest and pathogen identification, mapping, and management; precision agriculture practices; improvement of monitoring and scouting practices; and determining economic thresholds for treatment.

I have had opportunities to work with commodity boards, growers, and the academic community to determine best strategies and topics in research to benefit local agricultural communities; I look forward to establishing these relationships here in the Lake Erie region. Additionally, my time as a part-time faculty member in the College of Agriculture at California State University, Chico instilled a deep appreciation for the importance of educational programming, and I look forward to bringing relevant and timely content to my grower community.

Following in the footsteps of Andy Muza, I will be taking over the pest and disease scouting updates for the coming season and am excited to start spending some time outdoors. Along with updates about current conditions in our local vineyards, there will be short tutorials on using software, websites, apps, and technology to map and strategize seasonal management plans. Please reach out if there is a platform you'd like to see featured!

For those PA LERGP members who have not had a chance to meet me in person, I would like to offer an opportunity to schedule an appointment with me in April at either the Erie County Extension or LERGREC offices to pick up your copy of the 2023 NY-PA Pest Management Guidelines for Grapes and discuss any questions or concerns you have for the coming season. We should have those guides in hand by mid-April, and will be mailing them out like usual for those who can't make it in. Please contact me if you would like to schedule a site visit, or have any questions in the meantime, I look forward to hearing from you.



*Photo 6. Megan Luke, Penn State Viticulture & Tree Fruit Educator*



**Current office schedule (*subject to change*)**

M/W 8am-4:30pm CLEREL Portland, NY

T/Th 9am-5pm Erie Co. Cooperative Ext. Summit Municipal Bldg. Erie, PA

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