



*LERGP Crop Update
January 23, 2025*

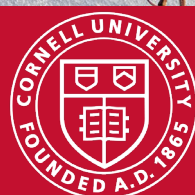
*Photo credit-
Kim Knappenberger*

Cornell Cooperative Extension
Lake Erie Regional Grape Program



PennState Extension

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In this copy:

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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.

LERGP Vineyard Planning Calendar 2025



You can still contact me to secure your LERGP 2025 Planning Calendar. We are not mailing them but we can arrange for pick up at either the NE Lab or CLEREL. They are only available to those that contact me and make those arrangements.

I look forward to hearing from you!

-Katie

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2025 LERGP Grape Grower Conference

*Thursday, March 20, 2025
SUNY Fredonia William's Center*

Registration is open!



We hope you have a wonderful holiday season!

*We look forward to seeing you
in the New Year!*

Business Management

Andrew Holden, Business Management Educator, Penn State University, LERGP

Local Application Rate High for Marketing Assistance for Specialty Crops Program

The USDA's Marketing Assistance for Specialty Crops (MASC) program deadline was January 10th. Over 55,000 specialty crop producers nationwide will receive assistance they can use to grow and sell their crops in 2025.

I have received word that some growers have already received their payments via direct deposit. Growers who applied should expect to receive payments through the end of this week. If you have not received a payment, there is a chance you are missing some documentation. If so, expect a call from your FSA Office to get that paperwork finalized. Growers should expect to receive payment before they receive their letter explaining the payments.

I am also happy to share that both Erie County PA and Chautauqua County NY received the highest amount of applications for each of their respective states. While we wait to hear the exact payment amounts to be announced, I am thrilled that so many of our growers were able to apply to this program with such short notice.

The FSA has published some information that I will include below regarding the payment factor. The payment being made currently is 60% of the payment factor, with the possibility of another payment once final calculations are made. There are still some unknowns as this program is so new.

Background

Because of the higher marketing costs related to specialty crop production and to immediately assist specialty crop producers in the expansion of markets in 2025, USDA will issue an initial MASC payment based on preliminary enrollment data received by the MASC deadline. After additional analysis is complete and all applications are processed, a final payment factor will be determined and payments issued. To ensure that payments do not exceed the \$2.65 billion authorized for the MASC Program, payment factors were established according to paragraph 2.

National Payment Factors for Sales Ranges

As discussed in the Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA), FSA used a statistical analysis of MASC enrollment data through January 10, 2025, to establish percent payment factors for each sales range. The initial factors were determined using the number of eligible MASC applicants, the total specialty crop sales reported by those applicants for each sales range, and the payment limitation per person or legal entity.

The national payment factors have been established as provided in the following table.

Sales Range	Percent Payment Factor
Up to \$49,999	3.8%
\$50,000 – \$99,999	3.5%
\$100,000 – \$499,999	3.4%
\$500,000 – \$999,999	3.1%
All sales over \$1,000,000	3.0%

National Payment Factor for Payment Calculation

After reviewing the sales data provided from the application software, the National Office has designated a national payment factor of 60 percent.

National Program Factor

To control the expenditure of funding; a program factor may be applied. The program factor will affect the payment calculation and payment limitation during the payment process. As a result, the national program factor is 100 percent.

Payment Limitation

As announced in the MASC Federal Register Notice (90 FR 1434, January 8, 2025), the payment limitation applicable to MASC is \$900,000.

The web-based payment system will automatically process payments for approved applications on January 17, 2025.

Free PSU Webinar 1/28/25: Farm Taxes: Special Rules for Farm Income

Do you know what farm income is, or have you ever questioned whether you're reporting all of it correctly? Join us for an informative webinar where you'll discover what qualifies as farm income, what doesn't, and why understanding the distinction is crucial. Learn the key aspects of farm income reporting and gain clarity on how to ensure your records are accurate and compliant with regulations.

What will you learn?

Strategies for Calculating and Controlling Labor Costs: Gain a deep understanding of how to accurately assess, budget for, and manage labor expenses in your farm or food business, helping you maintain profitability.

Event Details

A team of Penn State Extension experts will lead this free one-hour webinar, focusing on understanding farm income reporting.

This event is being offered at no charge to participants.

Registration is required to receive the link to access the webinar.

A link to the recorded webinar will be emailed to registrants within ten business days after the live event. The recording will be accessible for six months from the event date.

[Register Here](#)

Another downer for Washington juice grape growers

By: Jared Johnson, Ross Courtney

Source: <https://www.goodfruit.com/another-downer-for-washington-juice-grape-growers/>

Low juice grape prices went even lower.

After cash prices for many Washington Concord grapes plummeted in 2023, they dropped further for the 2024 harvest, said Trent Ball of Yakima Valley College.

“Not good; that is not a good graph,” said Ball, who delivered the annual State of Grapes presentation in November at the Washington State Grape Society annual meeting in Grandview.

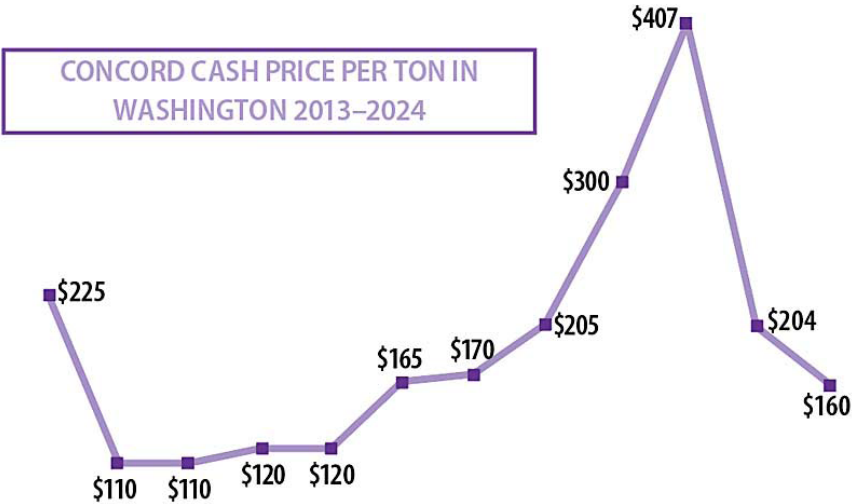
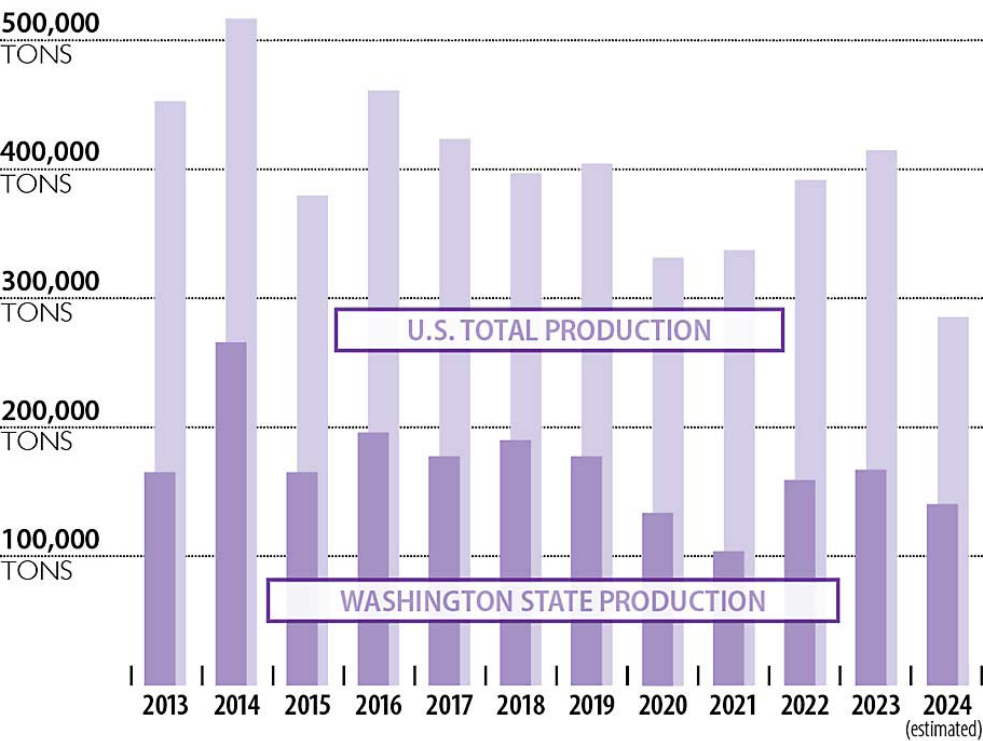
Washington’s weighted average cash price was \$160 per ton in 2024, down from \$204 the previous fall.

And just like last year, Ball has few explanations.

“Based on the information I have, it’s a head-scratcher,” he said in a follow-up interview with Good Fruit Grower.

Concord cash prices continue to decline

Two years after a record high, state cash prices have dropped to \$160 per ton.



According to Ball's calculations, Washington growers who sell to processors, rather than those under contract to the Welch's cooperative, should have received more than \$200 per ton in 2024.

Ball has compiled his industry report annually for more than 20 years, based on communication with growers and processors. They don't tell him everything, of course. It is possible processors doubt the quality of the concentrate they have in inventory or have lost large buyers, he said.

Also, that cash price does not include the contract prices paid by the nation's largest juice grape processor, the National Grape Cooperative Association, which markets the Welch's brand.

Welch's growers reported decent prices this year, "in the \$400 range" for grapes, said Carter Kilian, a Sunnyside grower. Kilian, a Washington State Grape Society board member, has some acreage contracted for Welch's and some that he sells to the J.M. Smucker Co.

Smucker's dropped its price from \$380 per ton for 2023's crop to only \$170 this year, said Grandview grower David Golladay.

"Just because they can," Golladay said.

That's about 60 percent of his cost of production, he said.

The price was an even bigger shock because the company told growers in late 2023 it needed more grape volume to keep up with demand for its products, primarily Uncrustables, Golladay said. The J.M. Smucker Co. expects the frozen, prepackaged, crustless peanut butter and jelly sandwiches to surpass \$1 billion in sales by 2026, after construction of a 900,000-square-foot production facility in Alabama, according to a recent news release from the company that owns the Smucker's brand. Up until 2023, processor prices lined up closely with each other, Ball said.

Supply and demand shed no light on the price surprises.

Washington and the Eastern U.S. production regions both harvested volumes well below their respective 10-year averages. Washington brought in 138,000 tons, compared to a 10-year average of 172,000. The Eastern region also collected about 138,000 tons, compared to its 197,000-ton average.

Production areas began removing acreage about 10 years ago, as a reaction to low prices, though Washington's harvested acreage inched up just slightly in 2024.

The price gap between East and West cash prices was nearly \$200 per ton for 2024. The East typically sees higher prices, but only by about \$30 to \$50 per ton, Ball said.

"It's a huge stratification," Ball said.

Smucker's did not reply to messages from Good Fruit Grower. Neither did Milne Fruit and Fruit Smart, the other two processors who purchase Washington Concords.

Concentrate prices, which fuel grape cash prices, don't explain much either. Washington received about \$15 per gallon of concentrate, Eastern growers about \$17. Those aren't record prices, but they are above average.

Ball was unsure what the future would bring.

“What’s cash price going to do? I don’t know,” Ball said. “It should have gone up.” •

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Viticulture

Jennifer Russo, Viticulture Extension Specialist, LERGP

In the Vineyard Frigid Temperatures

The weather has not been conducive for vineyard work the last couple of days. In the last Crop Update, I wrote about the Cold Hardiness Monitoring website [Click Here for the Bud Hardiness Prediction Model](#), where winter hardiness data from differential thermal analysis has been shared with industry since 2009, and is posted continually during the dormant season, providing growers with up to date information about potential winter injury to buds. Use this tool to help inform you if your cultivars may have experienced bud damage during the past few days.

When you select a particular station, the windows below will show the measured low temperatures at that site, along with the predicted freezing tolerance for the chosen cultivar, which can be selected by the user. These graphs will look more familiar to those who have looked at these charts in previous years. In the case of Portland, the chart displays the LT10, LT50 and LT90 values for each cultivar, along with the predicted LT50 value from the model (the gray line). If you hover your cursor over each of the lines on the website, it will show you the value for each time point that is charted.

As you can see in Figure 1. below, the low temperature blue line does not intersect with any of the models or LT10, 50, 90 measurements indicating that there isn't potential for injury for Concord to date. As of January 6, 2025, Concord LT50 was -16.6°F and on January 22, 2025, the NYUS2.1 model predicted that the LT50 for Concord at -21.82°F. Kim's NEWA low temperature graph had the lowest temps in our grape region at -7°F in Versailles, -6.7°F Harborcreek Escarpment, and -5.6°F at the North East (Side Hill) Station. Cabernet Franc was -10.84°F and modeled at -13.36°F on January 22, 2025 (Figure 2.), Riesling was -12.28°F and, also, modeled at -13.36°F on January 22, 2025, (Figure 3.) and our low temperature line has crossed the modeled low temperatures. That isn't to say that there is zero damage out in the belt, but the predicated model on the three cultivars provided doesn't indicate any. Use the above link to investigate other cultivars that you may have in your vineyard blocks.

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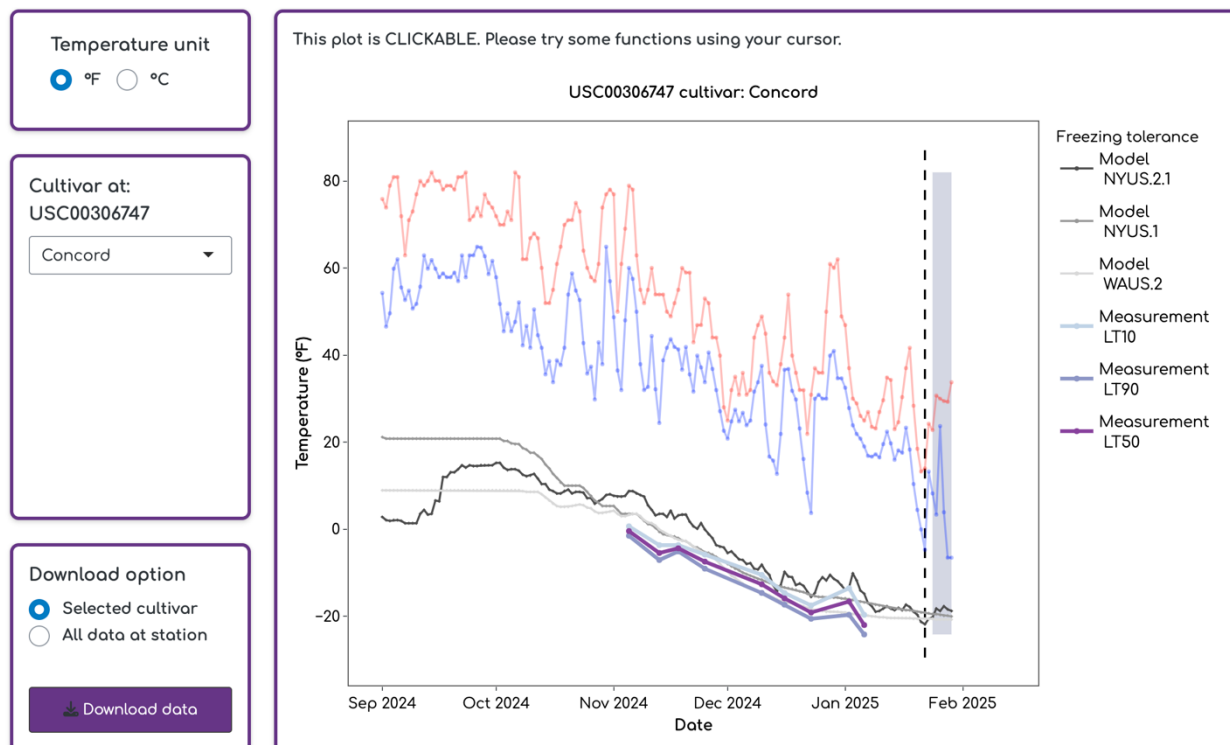


Figure 1. Screenshot of the Cornell Cold Hardiness Website data for Concord in Portland, NY taken on January 22, 2025, and previous weeks.

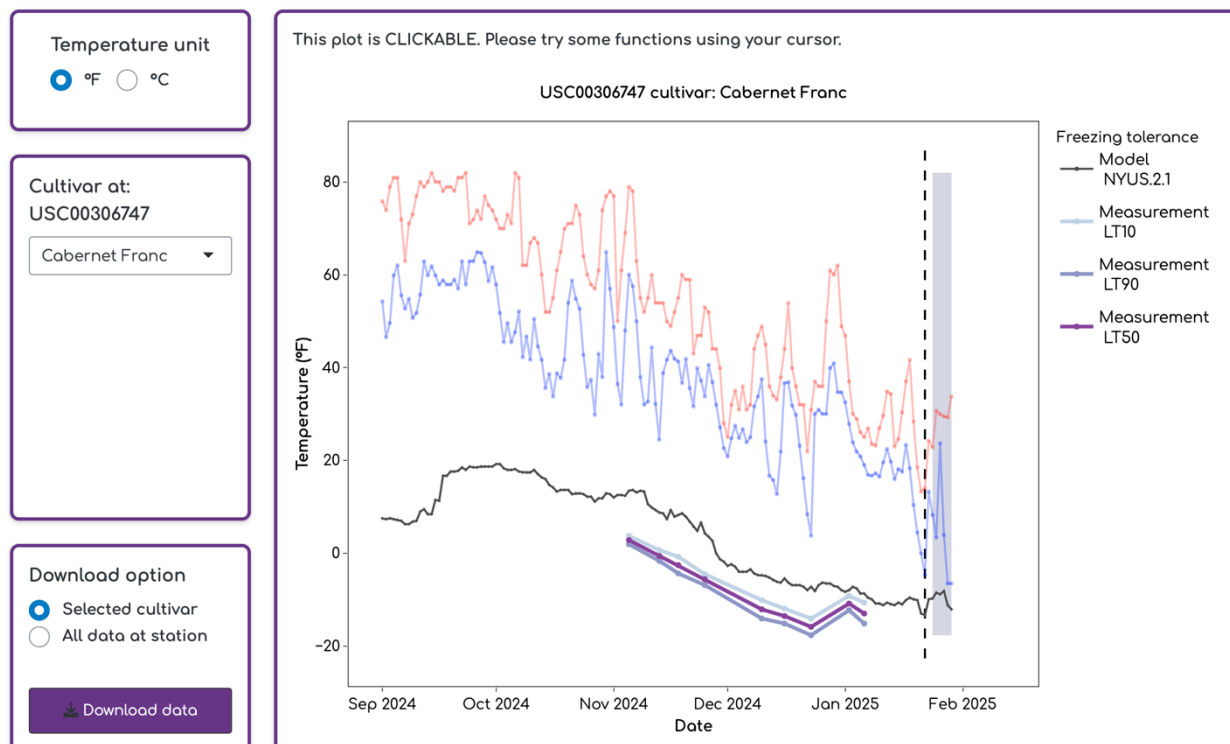


Figure 2. Screenshot of the Cornell Cold Hardiness Website data for Cabernet Franc in Portland, NY taken on January 22, 2025, and previous weeks.

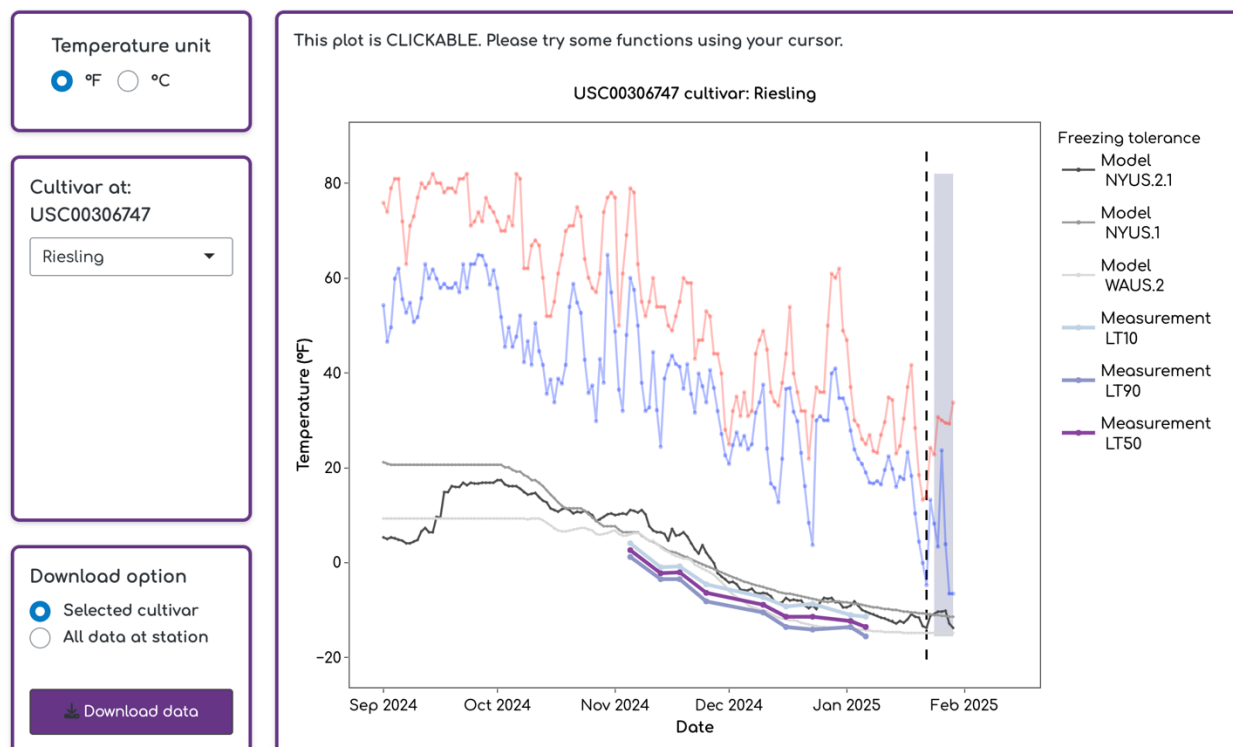


Figure 3. Screenshot of the Cornell Cold Hardiness Website data for Riesling in Portland, NY taken on January 22, 2025, and previous weeks

Winter Programming Opportunities

It is the time of year when we participate in virtual programming events to continue to provide educational outreach during the winter months. The **Eastern Viticulture and Enology Forum Series (EVEF)** is a collaborative series of webinars for grape growers and winemakers coordinated by PSE, Cornell, UME, and other land grant viticulture and enology extension programs. Please see below for details and the link to our next EVEF webinar.

When: February 18, 2025

(12:00 PM-1:30 PM ET)

Registration deadline: February 18, 2025

12:00 p.m.

About the Live Webinar

Vineyard floor management strategies in the eastern United States are shaped by diverse regional conditions, production goals, and local regulations. This session will explore the various factors influencing vineyard floor spaces and offer insights into effective weed control, the integration of cover crops, and tailored approaches for optimizing management. Whether navigating unique environmental challenges or striving to meet specific production objectives, grape producers will gain valuable knowledge to enhance vineyard health and productivity. Discover how to optimize vineyard floor management with strategies tailored to regional conditions, production goals, and regulations. Gain insights into cover crops, weed control, and best practices.

Event Details

This 90-minute live webinar is free and will address pre-submitted and live questions while reviewing current best practices in vineyard nutrient management. **Upon registration, a Qualtrics link will be provided for submitting questions to the panelists in advance.**

Eastern Viticulture and Enology Forum Series (EVEF) is a collaborative effort between the Penn State Extension Grape and Wine Team and several viticulture and 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.

This event is being offered at no charge to participants.

Registration is required to receive the link to access the webinar.

A link to the recorded webinar will be emailed to registrants within ten business days after the live event. The recording will be accessible for six months from the event date.

Who is this for?

- Vineyard owners
- Winery owners
- Vineyard managers
- Winemakers

What will you learn?

- Vineyard Cover Crop Fundamentals
- Vineyard Weed Management
- General Vineyard Floor Management Considerations

The series is delivered free to participants, though pre-registration is required to access the live webinars. **All viticulture webinars will be held from 12:00 p.m. to 1:30 p.m. ET and all enology webinars will be held from 1:00 to 2:00 PM ET (dates and topics in the table below).**

Date	Focus	Topic	Registration
January 21, 2025	Viticulture	Vineyard Nutrient Management: Expert Forum Discussion	Registration Link
January 28, 2025	Enology	SO2 Management: Putting Theory into Practice	Registration Link
February 18, 2025	Viticulture	Vineyard floor and weed management: Expert Forum Discussion	Registration Link
February 25, 2025	Enology	A discussion on piquette, low alcohol wines, and value-added products	Registration link coming soon
March 11, 2025	Viticulture	Vineyard disease management: Expert Forum Discussion	Registration Link
March 18, 2025	Enology	The wine microbiome and native fermentations	Registration link coming soon
April 15, 2025	Viticulture	Vineyard Sprayer Best Practices and Technology: Expert Forum Discussion	Registration Link
April 29, 2025	Enology	Managing low vs high pH; A Northern vs Southern US perspective	Registration link coming soon

This news article will be updated with webinar registration links as they become available. The “viticulture-focused webinar” links will also be posted to the [Penn State Extension Grape and Wine Production website](#). Stay tuned for where to access the “enology-focused webinar” links on Cornell’s website.

Understanding the IR-4 Project's Nomination and Priority Setting Processes

Lynn M. Sosnoskie, Cornell AgriTech

The **IR-4 Project (Interregional Research Project No. 4)** supports U.S. specialty crop growers by facilitating the registration of pest management solutions. Specialty crops—including fruits, vegetables, nuts, herbs, and ornamentals—often lack effective pest control options because their smaller market size makes it less profitable for companies to develop and register products for them. To address this, IR-4 conducts research to generate the data required for EPA registration, including studies on pest control efficacy, crop safety, and pesticide residues.

Currently, we are in the initial phase of the 2025 IR-4 priority-setting process, gathering input on pest, disease, and weed problems that lack effective solutions. This process begins with the online submission of **Project Clearance Requests (PCRs)**, which are formal proposals to study specific pest problems on crops. PCRs not only describe the pest issue but also suggest a potential solution (e.g., a specific insecticide, fungicide, or herbicide) for evaluation. The PCR form requires information such as projected use rates and patterns, export market considerations (including maximum residue limits or MRLs), and the value of the proposed product within an integrated pest management (IPM) framework. It also asks whether performance or safety data are available to support the request. Providing a detailed justification may improve the likelihood of the proposal being prioritized.

After a new PCR is reviewed by IR-4, the pesticide registrant evaluates the proposal. If the registrant declines to support it, the request can move no further. If deemed “researchable,” the proposal can be nominated for and prioritized at the annual **Food Use Workshop (FUW)** held in September. Prior to the FUW, IR-4 will submit a list of potential projects to the EPA for review with respect to toxicology, environmental fate, existing regulations, etc., to determine if there will be any foreseeable issues with a final submission to the agency. These considerations will be shared with FUW attendees to help guide the review process.

During the FUW, experts—including researchers, growers, industry representatives, and government officials—evaluate PCRs that were nominated for consideration earlier in the summer to identify the most urgent pest management needs. The FUW attendees prioritize projects with the greatest potential impact across crops and regions, ensuring IR-4's limited resources are allocated to the most critical research needs. Once a project is approved and initiated, research trials are assigned to researchers across the country. These trials may evaluate the product's performance, safety, and/or generate residue data. If residue data was required for a particular project, the results are reviewed by IR-4 and the registrant before a petition is prepared and submitted to the EPA. The EPA's review includes assessments of toxicology, environmental fate, and other regulatory considerations before an MRL is established.

The process is not fast; if a PCR is nominated for discussion at the FUW and prioritized for research trials, it will take at least 30 months before a submission is even made to the EPA. Despite this, the IR-4 Project remains one of the best avenues for securing new or expanded pesticide labels for fruits, vegetables, and other specialty crops. Without the IR-4 Project, many pesticide manufacturers wouldn't pursue registrations for minor-use crops because of low potential profits and crop injury concerns. By bridging this gap, IR-4 safeguards the economic viability of specialty crop production.

Link to the IR-4 Project: <https://www.ir4project.org/>

Link to the IR-4 Project PCR Submission: <https://www.ir4project.org/about-ir4/submit-a-request/>

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PA Update

Megan Luke, Penn State Extension Viticulture and Tree Fruit Educator

Registration for the on-site calibration program is open for spring 2025.

On-site visits begin in April! Please contact Megan Luke or register through the LERGP website soon to secure your spot. This program is free of charge for NY or PA LERGP members within the Lake Erie region.

Register online [here](#)

The Pennsylvania Wine and Grape Industry Conference is scheduled for February 26 and 27, 2025, in State College, Pennsylvania.

Grape growers, wine producers, educators, researchers, and other industry stakeholders in Pennsylvania's wine and grape industry will gather at the Penn Stater Hotel and Conference Center in State College on February 26 and 27, 2025, for the annual Pennsylvania Wine and Grape Industry Conference, hosted by the [Pennsylvania Wine Marketing and Research Program](#), [Pennsylvania Winery Association](#), and Penn State Extension. The Pennsylvania Winery Association annual meeting will be held on February 25th, before the two-day technical conference. The two-day event will provide a venue for grape/wine education and an important in-person networking opportunity for regional grape and wine industry stakeholders.

Find additional details, including registration and travel information, [here](#)

Reminder: Free respirator fit testing at Burch Farms on Wednesday, February 12th

Penn State Extension's Pesticide Education team offers this free service, which takes place each year during the Winter Commercial Tree Fruit event in Erie County. You DO NOT have to participate in the Tree Fruit event to receive a respirator fit test and the required 30-minute training that comes with a letter or certification. The testing and certification are free; you can sign up for a spot and show up only during that time.

Free respirator fit testing is open to any PA grower and a limited number of NY growers IF you are a LERGP member. Don't hesitate to contact Megan Luke to be put on the list to schedule your test when registration opens.

Remember that respirator fit testing is mandatory for pesticide applicators using pesticides that require respirators. Clean and inspect your device for damage and replace cartridges as needed.

EPA Herbicide AND Insecticide Strategy Updates

If you haven't read about the upcoming changes to pesticide labeling, please see the resources listed below from previous Crop Updates. On the LERGP team, we are working closely with both PDA and DEC compliance specialists, Cornell NYS IPM, and the PSU Pesticide Education teams to provide the most up-to-date information regarding these strategies and our responsibilities as educators and applicators. As these changes take effect, we look forward to offering collaborative resources for growers in the coming years.

Current status of several pesticides under review (NO CHANGES FROM PREVIOUS UPDATE):

Ziram- Can be used for the 2025 growing season. A 12-month grace period to remove the product from the pipeline will start in 2025. **EPA-HQ-OPP-2015-0568**

Mancozeb- No updates are available at this time. The proposed cancelation of use in grapes is under review after the public comment period closed in Oct. 2024. **EPA-HQ-OPP-2015-0291**

Captan- Labels will be updated with the new language in the next 12 months. Review the label carefully at the time of purchase. **EPA-HQ-OPP-2013-0296**

Docket information and review timing can be found at:

<https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-reevaluation/upcoming-registration-review-actions>

Docket documents and open comment periods can be found at:

<https://www.regulations.gov/>

Search by the docket number listed above, then choose the “docket documents” tab, and select “sort by” and “newest” or “comments due (newer-older).”

EPA’s Bulletin Live! 2 Website can be found here: <https://www.epa.gov/endangered-species/bulletins-live-two-view-bulletins>

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Updates and Information

Kimberly Knappenberger, Extension Support Specialist, LERGP

NEWA

I'm sure you all noticed the recent cold spell we experienced that left us colder than a polar bear's toenails! Colder than a penguin's tuxedo??? Anyhow...

Thanks to the polar vortex bringing frigid temperatures across the United States and record snowfall in the southern states, we experienced our lowest temperatures on Wednesday morning, generally between 6:00-8:00AM. Below is a chart of the lowest temperatures recorded at each weather station as reported to NEWA.

Station	Low Temp °F	Time of Low
Burt (NY Mesonet)	-2	8:00
North Appleton	-2.2	8:00
Newfane (Chateau Niag)	-2	8:00
Ransomville	0.9	8:00
Lockport	-0.9	6:00
Brant	-4.9	8:00
Versailles	-7	8:00
Sheridan	-1.8	8:00
Sheridan (Liberty)	0.1	6:00
Silver Creek (RT5)	0	7:00
Silver Creek (Double A)	-2.6	8:00
Hanover	-5.9	8:00
Forestville	-0.6	8:00
East Fredonia	-3.4	8:00
Fredonia (NY Mesonet)	-3	8:00
Dunkirk (Route 5)	-0.4	8:00
Brocton	-3.7	8:00
Portland (CLEREL)	-2.7	7:00
Westfield (South)	-4.2	7:00
East Westfield	-4.2	8:00
Westfield	-3.1	8:00
East Ripley	1.2 (estimated)	9:00
Ripley	-2.6	7:00
Ripley (State Line)	-2.4	8:00
Ripley (Escarpment)	-4.5	8:00
North East (State Line)	-4.2	9:00
North East Lab	-4.5	8:00
North East (Escarpment)	-5	8:00
North East (Side Hill)	-5.6	8:00

Station	Low Temp °F	Time of Low
Harborcreek Escarpment	-6.7	8:00
Harborcreek	-2.6	8:00
Lake City	-5	8:00
Lake City (Mason Farms)	-4.4	8:00



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<https://lergp.com/>

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Veraison to Harvest:

<https://cals.cornell.edu/viticulture-enology/research-extension/veraison-harvest>

