



*LERGP Crop Update
January 29, 2026*



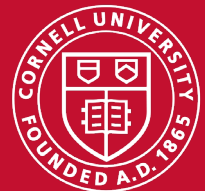
**Sunrise at CLEREL-
Kate Robinson**

Cornell Cooperative Extension
Lake Erie Regional Grape Program



PennState Extension

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In this copy:

Registration for 2026 Winter Grape Grower Conference is open! [REGISTER NOW!](#)

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[Click here to
watch Podcasts](#)

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.

2026 LERGP WINTER GRAPE GROWER CONFERENCE

**THURSDAY, MARCH 19, 2026
WILLIAM'S CENTER
SUNY FREDONIA COLLEGE
8:00am-4:30pm**

**Come spend a day with your LERGP team,
invited guest speakers and fellow growers.**

**Take a look at the full agenda and register by
scanning the QR code.**

We look forward to seeing you!



Business Management

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

Get Prepared for Two New York Farm Viability Institute Grants

Two New York Farm Viability Institute grants are set to open in early 2026. Both are round two of grants offered last year.

The first grant to watch out for is the **NYS Beginning Farmer Competitive Grant Program**. NYFVI anticipates launching Round Two, which will award \$1.7 million early in 2026. The program will continue to seek proposals that will advance Beginning Farmer's plan to grow their business and become a financially sustainable, independent, agricultural enterprise.

Potential applicants are encouraged to review the analysis as well as the grant information and resources that were provided for the first round [here](#).

The second grant is the **NYS Grown & Certified ITRD Grant Program**. It is also expected to be released in early 2026. The program will continue to seek proposals from farm and food businesses that are participating in the NYS Grown & Certified program.

Potential applicants are encouraged to review the information and resources provided for the first round [here](#).

The NYFVI also will notify you when applications are open for submission here: [SIGN UP FOR ROUND 2 RELEASE NOTIFICATIONS](#).

I will share when these grants open, and as always will be available to help growers with applications and questions.

What I'm reading:

- [Tariff Revenue from Ag Input Imports was Nearly \\$1 Billion in 2025](#)

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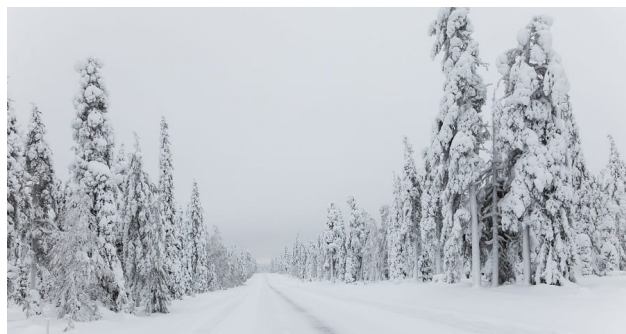
Jennifer Russo, Viticulture Extension Specialist, LERGP

In the Vineyard

Frigid...

Cornell University Extension has a website, [All-hazards Preparedness & Response Education Program](#), as resource. The following information is important to the health and safety of you, your employees, and your operation:

Winter Storms



Heavy snow, ice storms, and extreme cold can cause severe property damage and put human and animal lives at risk. Accurate predicting of winter storms can help people prepare by making sure they have adequate fuel, food, and other supplies on hand, but an unexpected change in wind direction can result in major snow accumulation in a localized region. In New York, this is often referred to as **lake-effect snow** because it generally involves geographic areas near Lake Erie or Lake Ontario.

Key terms:

- **Winter Storm Outlook**– storm conditions are possible in the next 2-5 days.
- **Winter Storm Watch**– storm conditions are possible within the next 36-48 hours.
- **Winter Weather Advisory**– weather conditions may be hazardous.
- **Winter Storm Warning**– severe winter conditions have begun or will begin within 24 hours.

Preparedness and Safety

[Disaster Resource Center](#) – United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)

[East Coast Winter Storms](#) climatological and forecasting data – Northeast Regional Climate Center

[Electrical Power Outages](#) Safety tips to help you prepare for and cope with the sudden loss of power by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

[Preventing Carbon Monoxide Poisoning](#) guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

[Readiness Checklist: Preparing for the Thaw \(PDF\)](#)– By Keith G. Tidball, PhD, Extension Disaster Education Network

[Safe Operation of Emergency Generators \(PDF\)](#) – recommendations for safe residential and farm use of generators during power outage situations by Eric Hallman and Richard Peterson, Cornell Agricultural Health and Safety Program

[Severe weather fire safety outreach materials](#) from the U.S. Fire Administration

[Winter Safety](#) guidance from National Weather Service

[Winter Safety Guide \(PDF\)](#) – CCE Warren County and the Warren County Disaster Preparedness Office

[Winter Storm Safety](#) guidance from the Red Cross

[Winter Weather on Ready.gov](#)

[Winter Weather](#) safety and preparation resources from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Monitoring Grape Bud Hardiness

Dr. Jason Londo, and I have been collaborating on grapevine cold hardiness monitoring since 2019 while he was a Research Geneticist with the USDA-ARS Grape Genetics Unit, located at Cornell AgriTech in Geneva, New York. Jason joined Cornell University's Horticulture Section faculty in January 2022 as an associate professor of fruit crop physiology and climate adaptation. Dr. Londo's lab focuses on understanding the interaction between climate stresses and genetic diversity in fruit crops, manifested as physiological optimization and adaptation. Major projects focus on field, greenhouse, and molecular approaches to studying physiology in apples and grapes. Topics include the transcriptomic and methylomic drivers of winter physiology, cold hardiness and dormancy, rootstock-scion physiological interaction, phenotypic plasticity and climate change resilience and optimization.

Dr. Londo manages the Cornell grapevine cold hardiness monitoring program and the NEWA website is the new home for the cold hardiness model. [Click here to access the model.](#) In Figure 1 below, you can see the Freeze risk assessment for Concord on January 29, 2026. Through our local monitoring, Concord LT50 (Letal Temperature where 50% bud death may occur) is currently at -21.8 F. Figure 2 has the freeze risk for Chardonnay LT50 at -14.1 F, and Riesling in Figure 3 has an LT50 of -13.5 F. Dr. Londo's current research is focusing on understanding aspects of winter hardiness and spring deacclimation in apples and grapes to identify the rootstocks and scion combinations that provide the greatest resistance to early winter warming conditions.

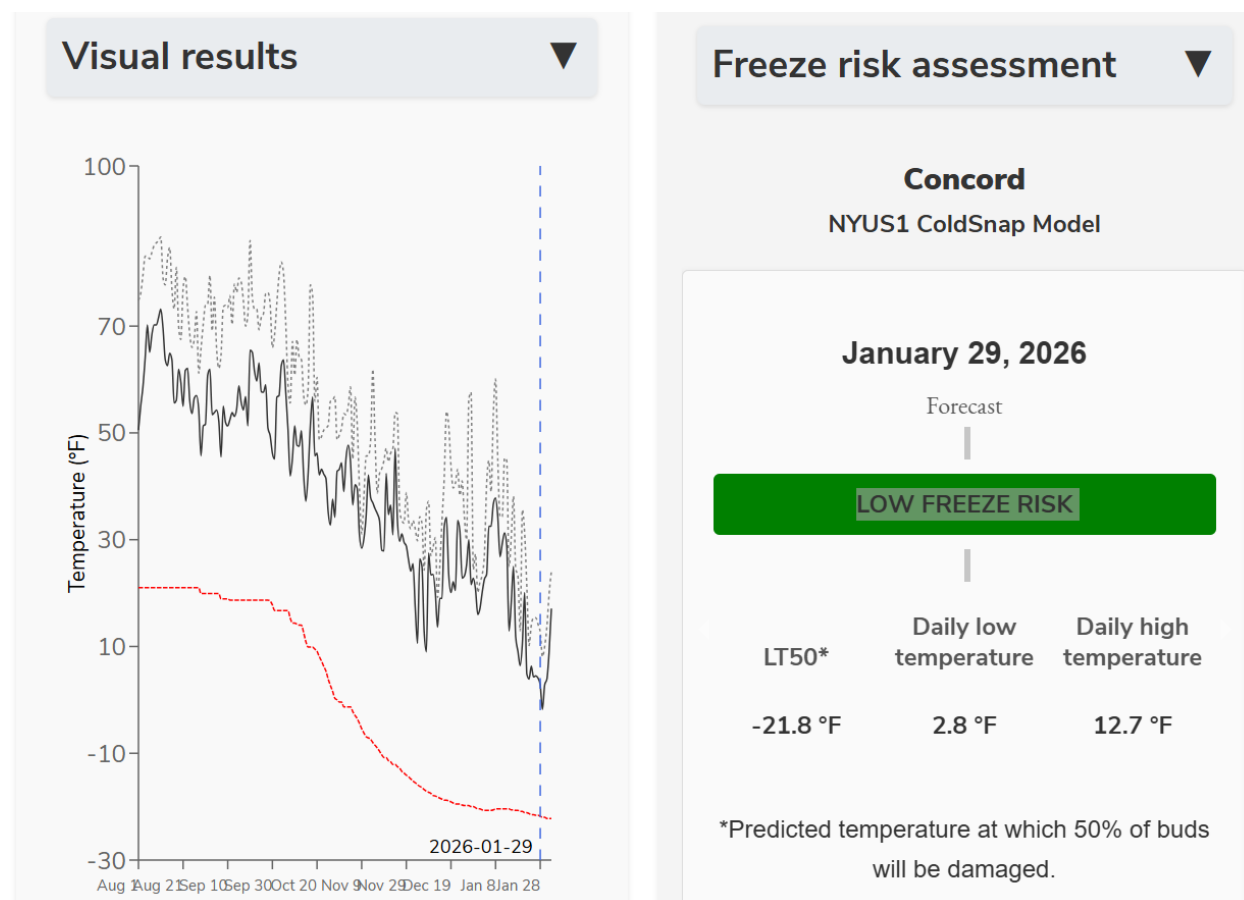


Figure 1. Concord freeze risk is low per the NEWA model

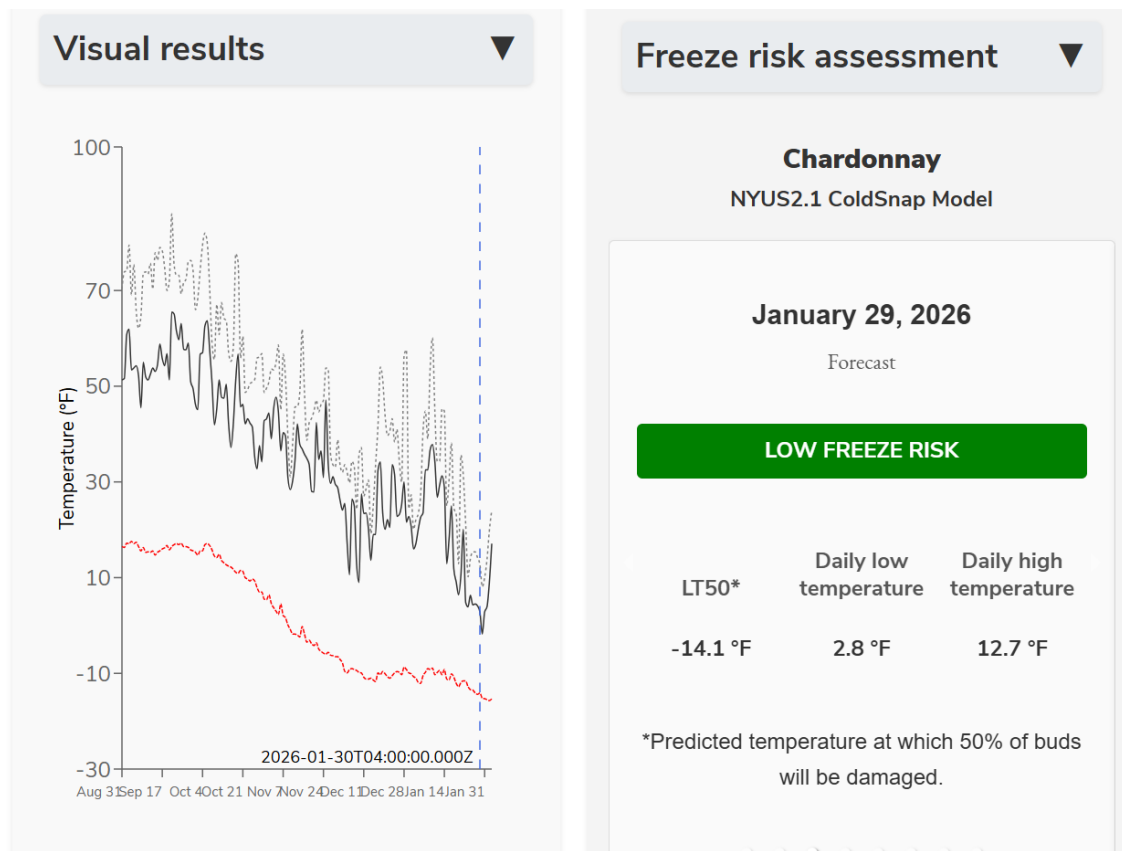


Figure 2. Chardonnay Freeze risk is low per the NEWA model

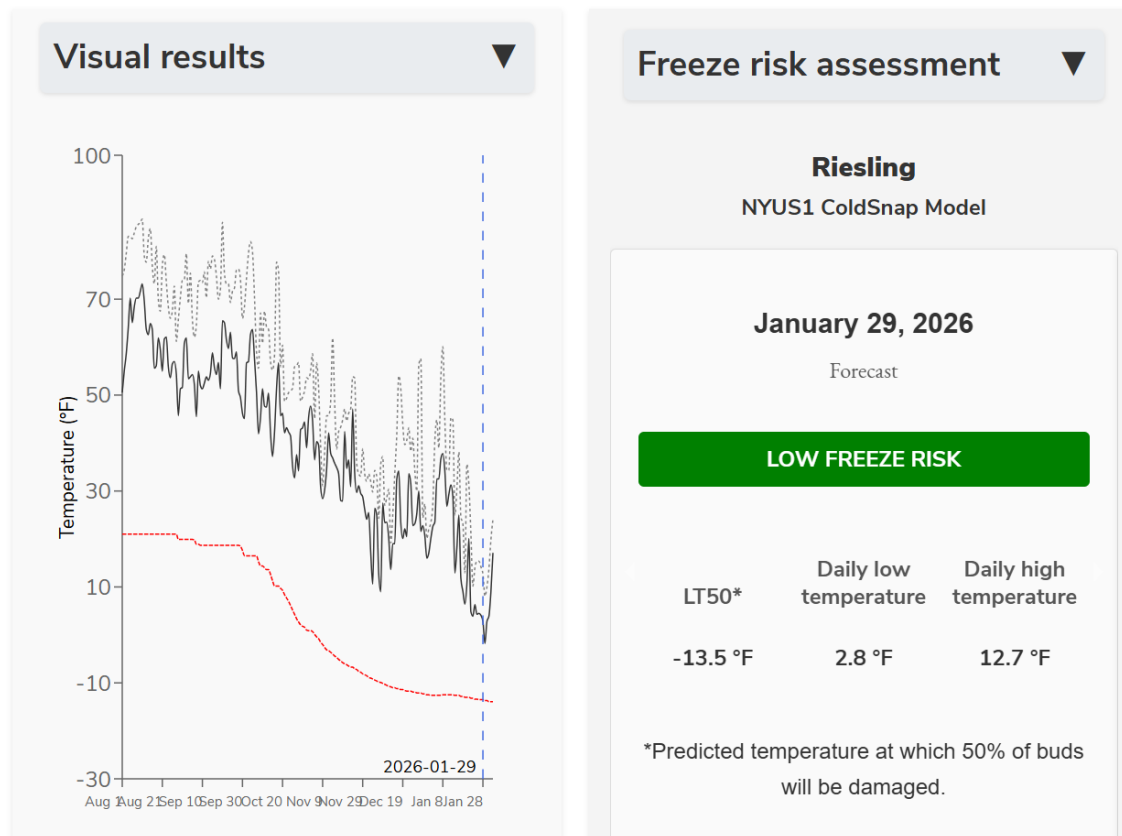


Figure 3. Riesling Freeze risk is low per the NEWA model

Jason's extension program goals are to provide research driven-tools and information to the New York fruit crop industry focusing on adapting crops to climate-change-induced environmental stress. He works collaboratively with other faculty members, Cornell Cooperative Extension, and stakeholders to identify climate induced disorders, develop mitigation methods, and improve the resilience and sustainability of fruit crop production through applied research.

One of our collaborations includes monitoring grapevine cold hardiness. The following is the context from the New York Wine and Grape Foundation grant: Winter and spring temperature profiles are departing from the range of variability the New York climate regions had experienced from the mid-1950s to the 1990s. In 2012, unseasonably warm temperatures in March prompted the earliest budburst in history and led to a series of post-budburst frost events that reduced the Concord crop by 25%. While 15 of the last 16 years have seen global temperature records, January 2014 brought the arctic vortex south, and with it several sub-zero temperature episodes, with significant bud and trunk injury to Niagara grapes, some hybrids and *V. vinifera* in western and central New York. In 2015, a cold spell brought temperatures down to -22 to -29 °F in mid-February. Since the winters of 2016-2017, midwinter-low temperatures have been more moderate, with only modest levels of bud injury.

The trend is for warmer temperatures to extend further into the fall, and for episodes of warmer weather in the spring, interspersed with frosts. This became clear in December 2015, when daytime maximum temperature was above freezing 30 of 31 days, and both daytime maximum and nighttime minimum were above freezing during 18 of the 31 days of December. Warm temperatures before mid-winter lows can delay cold weather acclimation of grapevine buds and trunks, while mid-winter lows (late December to Early February) still potentially reach damaging levels – as the cold January temperatures associated with the polar vortex event dropped temperatures to the -8 to -14 F range in the Finger Lakes and Lake Erie regions. Both mid-winter lows and spring frost injury are key concerns to grape growers. Finally, the regional grape industry has expanded beyond traditional regions with water-moderated climates to inland areas subject to more 'continental' climates – and therefore to more frequent spring frost episodes.

Digital Thermal Analysis (DTA), which involves collecting and subjecting buds to controlled freezing runs, is a proven method for documenting bud freezing temperatures. Used in conjunction with min/max temperature records, it has been proven to correlate well with observed bud injury in vineyards (determined by direct examination of buds, i.e. bud cutting').

The Lake Erie Regional Grape Program has acquired equipment (freezers and data acquisition units) to use Digital Thermal Analysis (DTA) at the Cornell Lake Erie Research and Extension Laboratory (CLEREL). The DTA unit at CLEREL allows the research and extension team to process extension samples at the CLEREL and do more frequent and detailed evaluations. A major goal is to document how crop adjustment and crop load impacts bud hardiness and potential crop of Concord and Niagara grapes – and thereby evaluate the economic risks of over cropping and potential freeze damage based on production practices. This information would allow grape growers to adjust practices and respond to climatic events.

Practical Importance and Previous Work

Low Temperature Exotherms. Since the winter of 2009-2010, we have conducted surveys of winter bud hardiness (called Low Temperature Exotherms or LTEs) in four selected cultivars, representing a range of cold sensitivity. Procedures for determining LTEs (Mills et al 2006) are well established, and we have posted results for the industry and extension newsletters on a bud hardiness web

page. (Fig. 1, below)

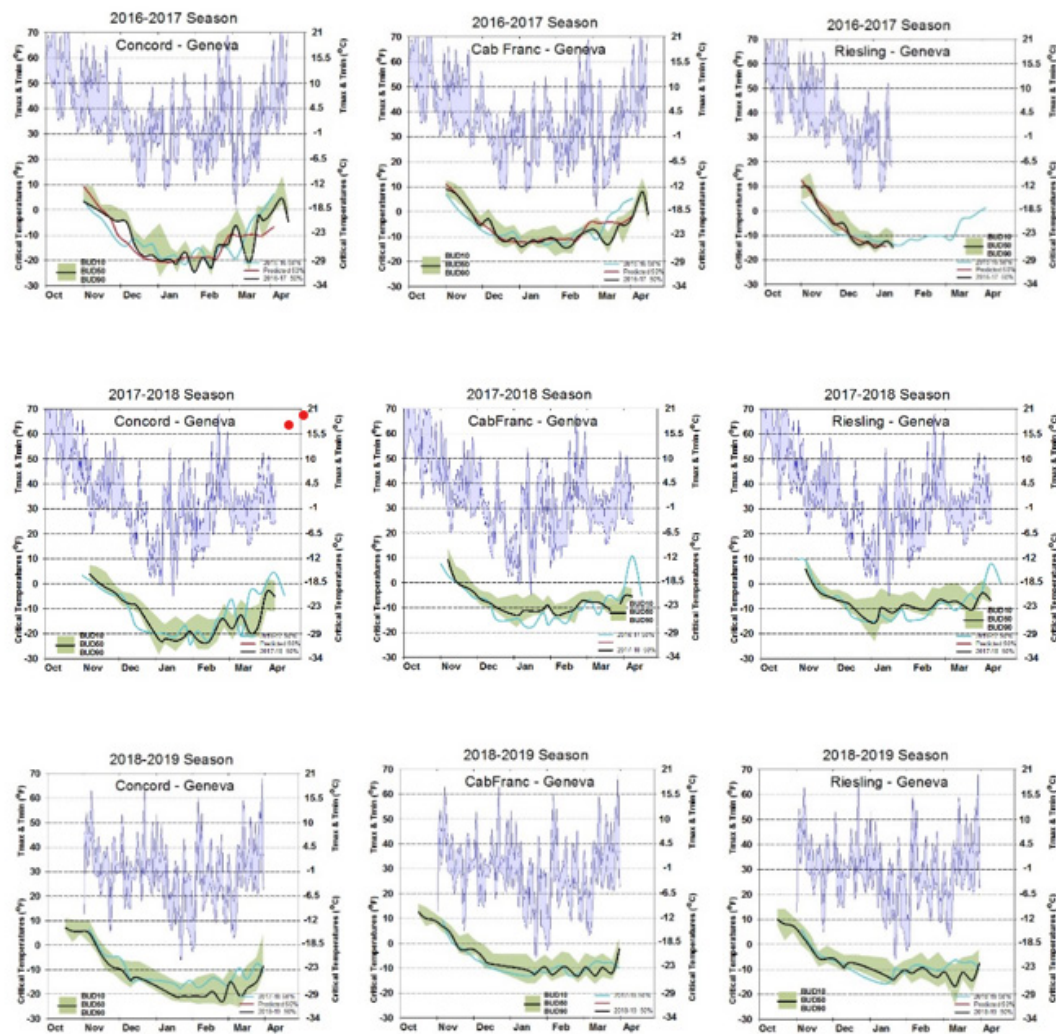


Figure 4. Daily min/max temperatures and bud freezing temperatures (Low Temperature exotherms from laboratory tests on dormant buds; black line is LT50) in Cabernet franc, Riesling, and Concord at Geneva in 2016-2017, 2017-2018 and 2018-2019. Note where minimum temperature overlaps with bud-freezing LT50 for Cabernet franc and Riesling in both 2015 and 2016, but not for Concord. To date in 2017-2018, one cold episode (Early January) reached sub-zero temperatures. In 2018-2019, LT50s were well below winter minimum temperatures, which reached -5°F in late January and -2°F in early February. Current season data collection is ongoing, but vines are showing good levels of cold hardiness.

In 2014 and 2015, results from the midwinter LTE measurements gave growers an early warning and 'heads-up' to growers to do extensive bud injury surveys in their vineyards and adjust pruning levels accordingly. Regional extension programs in the Lake Erie, Finger Lakes, and Hudson Valley, followed up with extensive bud collections and evaluations in March 2014. The documentation of the severity and extent of bud injury led to efforts by New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets (NYSDAM) to evaluate the probable extent of crop loss and winter injury in 2014, to allow farm wineries to purchase grapes out of state. This was again pursued in 2015, with determination by NYSDAM that significant injury was limited to a few varieties and

geographical areas but didn't reach 40% crop reduction statewide. The past three winters (2016-2017, 2017-2018, and 2018-2019) had no significant winter low temperatures, and minimal bud injury was observed.

There were many objectives of this research including weekly monitoring of LTE's during acclimation, dormancy, and deacclimation across the Lake Erie, Finger Lakes, and Hudson Valley grape regions. Another objective was to post the data to the at [Bud Hardiness Data Website Click Here](#), 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. Dr. Londo and his lab were tasked to develop a temperature-driven model that is based on real measurements of the physical response of vines to different de-acclimation temperatures. They used data collected from this project to validate the model, which we hope will provide New York and Pennsylvania growers with accurate predictions of bud freezing temperatures (based on daily min/max temperatures) and will be accessible regionwide through the NEWA weather site. Once this system has been validated, we'll discontinue collections at commercial sites.

Having bud hardiness and injury information posted in a grower-friendly format allows growers to make better decisions about the need to monitor and respond to potential injury events. Our information has identified freeze injury events in two of the past five years. Equipment for DTAs at CLEREL expanded the number and extent of LTE's in the region, and allow additional information to be collected from existing research projects at CLEREL. All of this data was used to help train the model and generate accurate predictions of bud freezing temperatures.

I encourage growers to check out the NEWA site and see how it works for themselves. As I mentioned, it's still a work in progress but it provides important information about potential bud injury for growers around the state, not just a few locations in the Finger Lakes and Lake Erie regions.

This work has been a collaboration of many as this update has been as well. We will continue to work together to bring you new tools for understanding the interaction between climate stresses and genetic diversity in grapevines, manifested as physiological optimization and adaptation, such as cold hardiness fluctuations.

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PA Update

Megan Luke, Penn State Extension Viticulture and Tree Fruit Educator

SAVE THE DATE REMINDER

Free respirator fit testing at Burch Farms on Wednesday, February 11th

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.

The free 30-minute training is worth one 1 PA core credit. The training begins at 11:15 AM.

Free respirator fit testing is open to any PA grower and a limited number of NY growers IF you are a LERGP member. No NY credits will be available, but you can still receive the training certificate and a free fit test. Please arrive before the start of the talk. I will be available to direct you at the event. FYI, lunch is only provided to those registered for the Commercial Tree Fruit School, but coffee should be available.

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 required.

Respirator Fit Test Program 2026

Jan. 27-28 at Mid-Atlantic Fruit & Vegetable (MAFVC)— Hershey, PA

Feb. 3 at Penn State Crops Conference— Lebanon, PA

Feb. 11 at Winter Tree Fruit School— North East, PA (Erie)

Feb. 12 at Winter Tree Fruit School— Wexford, PA (Allegheny)

Feb. 16 at Winter Tree Fruit School— Biglerville, PA (Adams)

Feb. 19 at Winter Tree Fruit School— Leesport, PA (Berks)

Feb. 25 at PA Wine and Grape Conference— State College, PA

Mar. 12 at Penn State Vegetable Grower meeting— Wexford, PA

Jun. 18 at Phipps Conservatory — Pittsburgh, PA

For more details, contact: stw5035@psu.edu or 814-863-9606 or

visit: extension.psu.edu/upcoming-respirator-fit-test-sessions



Photo: Garo Goodrow, Penn State Extension

***Participants must bring their respirator(s) and be clean shaven.**

The Penn State Pesticide Education Program has partnered with third-party vendors to provide FREE respirator fit testing and medical evaluations! A 30-minute respirator training will be offered at each event. The events assist individuals in satisfying the EPA's Worker Protection Standard (WPS) respirator regulations.



PennState Extension

Upcoming PA Wine Marketing Research Board Conference

State College, PA February 25th-26th

The *Pennsylvania Grape and Wine Industry Conference* is designed for all stakeholders in the East Coast grape and wine industry. Whether you are a novice grape grower or winemaker or an established grower and producer, educator, researcher, wine marketer, or business professional, this annual industry conference is designed with you in mind. The event is hosted by the Pennsylvania Wine Marketing and Research Program in partnership with Penn State Extension and the Pennsylvania Winery Association (PWA).

Eligible participants have the opportunity to receive Pennsylvania Pesticide Recertification Training Credits from PDA if they attend the appropriate technical sessions during the conference (pending PDA approval). Megan Luke of the Lake Erie Regional Grape Program will present a talk titled "Drought to deluge, pesticide application best practices for changing weather patterns", eligible for PDA pesticide applicator recertification credit (Core 00). Respirator fit testing is also available, free of charge.

A complete conference agenda is available on the [PA Wine Marketing Research Board website](#) or the [Pennsylvania Winery Association](#). A block of rooms has been set aside at the Nittany Lion Inn. Contact [The Nittany Lion Inn](#) (814) 865-8500 and reference group number PENN26W to make your reservation. The group rate is available until January 29.

Register for the conference [here](#).

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Updates and Information

Kimberly Knappenberger, Viticulture & IPM Extension Support Specialist, LERGP

NEWA

I started the day today with an inbox full of messages that our weather stations were not sending data. Great! (sarcasm)

It turns out that there was a temporary disconnect between the Ambient Weather Network and NEWA. I don't have all the details – probably don't actually need them because if it works we are happy, but if it doesn't we are annoyed. The good news is that we can be happy again! As of 10:00 AM on Thursday (today) the interruption was corrected and the data is back! For those that look on AWN the data had been there all along. We are glad that it was an easy fix!

The fleet of stations is humming along in spite of the cold with the Westfield (South) station back in its place after servicing. Even the East Ripley and Versailles stations are sending data when the sun manages to shine for a bit! (Looking on the bright side!)

I thought I would send a quick glimpse of the cold temperatures that we have been having across our grape belt over last week and so far this week. These are just actual temps and do not take into consideration the wind chill! The values for the second week were collected at 1:45PM on Thursday so it does not count the low temperatures to come tonight, tomorrow and Saturday. Please stay warm and keep your skin covered if you are outside for any amount of time.



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	1.18.26-1.24.26			1.25.26-1.29.26		
	Avg temp	High temp	Low temp	Avg temp	High temp	Low temp
Burt (Lakeside Tabor)	18.1	34.5	2.5	13.8	21	7.1
Newfane (Chateau Niagara)	17.5	34.2	1.4	13	19.8	6
Ransomville	17.9	34.7	2.1	12.6	18.3	6
Lockport	17.4	33.8	1.4	11.5	17.1	4.9
Brant	15.3	34.9	-7.2	9.7	15.6	2
Versailles	15.4	34.1	-4.9	9.8	15.8	2.9
Hanover	15.8	34.7	3.9	9.7	15.5	4
Silver Creek (Route 5)	17.3	35.6	5.4	10.5	17.6	3.7
Silver Creek (Double A)	16.5	34.9	3.9	9.8	16.7	2.9
Dunkirk (Route 5)	17.3	35.6	5.7	11.1	18	4
Sheridan	16.6	35.8	4.6	10.2	19.2	3
Sheridan (Liberty)	16.7	35.4	4.8	10.2	16.7	4
Forestville	15.9	34.4	4.6	9.3	14.5	4
East Fredonia	15.9	33.9	4.4	9.5	14.9	3.8
Brocton Escarpment	15.9	35.4	4	9.5	15	2.9
Portland	16.4	35.6	4	9.7	15.5	4
Portland LERGP West	16.9	36	3.7	10.4	16.5	4
East Westfield	15.9	35.6	3	9.2	14.7	3.4
Westfield	16.9	36.4	4.3	9.8	16.1	3.3
Westfield (South)	16.3	33.6	3.7	10.1	15.8	4
East Ripley	17.4	35.7	4.7	10.6	16.5	4.3
Ripley	16.4	36.2	1.6	9.8	15.8	3.9
Ripley Escarpment	16.2	35.6	-0.5	9.9	15.8	3.2
Ripley State Line	16.3	36.6	2.3	9.4	15.7	3.7
North East State Line	14.5	35	0.3	8.6	13.9	1.8
North East Escarpment	15.3	35.7	0.4	9.2	15.4	1
North East Sidehill	14.9	35.6	0.1	9.1	14.5	1
North East Lab	16.7	35.9	1.3	10.6	15.9	3.8
Harborcreek	16.6	36.6	1.2	10.4	16.6	2.9
Harborcreek Escarpment	13.9	34.9	-4.3	8.5	13.5	1.3
Lake City	15.3	36.7	-8.1	10.8	18.4	2.6
Lake City (Mason Farms)	15.5	36.7	-8	10.2	16.5	2.9

Upcoming Events and Mark Your Calendar Days

Thursday, March 19, 2026-Winter Grape Grower Conference- [register today!](#)

Wednesday, April 8, 2026-How to Certified Course-NYSDEC

Wednesday, April 15, 2026- NYSDEC Pesticide Applicator Exam at CLEREL

**Stop in to the CLEREL office to pick up
your 2026 LERGP Planning calendar
anytime!**

Links of Interest:

Cornell Cooperative Extension:

<https://cals.cornell.edu/cornell-cooperative-extension>

Efficient Vineyard:

<https://www.efficientvineyard.com/>

LERGP:

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

<https://lergp.com/>

NYSIPM:

[https://cals.cornell.edu/new-york-state-integrated-pest-man-
agement](https://cals.cornell.edu/new-york-state-integrated-pest-management)

Veraison to Harvest:

[https://cals.cornell.edu/viticulture-enology/research-exten-
sion/veraison-harvest](https://cals.cornell.edu/viticulture-enology/research-extension/veraison-harvest)

Spotted Lanternfly Pocket Guide:

<https://lergp.com/spotted-lanternfly>