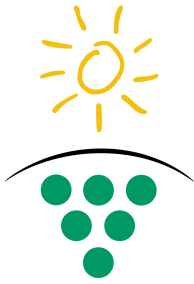


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COOPERATIVE
RESEARCH CENTRE
for
VITICULTURE

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Disclaimer

The information contained in this newsletter is often written by growers and published in an unedited form. As such, it should be used as a guide only. The Cooperative Research Centre for Viticulture accepts no responsibility for the consequences of the use of the information.



Growers sharing information with other growers

2002 McLaren Vale Vintage interim

by Adam Jacobs
McLaren Vale

The McLaren Vale season has been most interesting to say the least. Reeling from the hottest season in 105 years to the coolest in many decades, the season started with some very good rains throughout winter. Due to some unfavourable conditions such as wind and cool temperatures, the season has been some three weeks behind itself. This has caused some vineyards to experience impeded flowering and fruit set and ultimately lower crops. The cooler start and lower winter rainfall contributed to some problems early, but ripening progressed slowly up to Christmas time.

Small outbreaks of powdery mildew in January, which have worsened through to March, have been reported in the district. Some of the larger wineries have rejected crops in isolated cases and/ or reduced payments for 5-20% powdery mildew disease. Grape prices

have remained stable with a demand for red varieties in particular Shiraz still being a major focus. One outstanding performer has been Chardonnay as it has been in demand and receiving high prices compared to the 2000 vintage where it was deemed as being in oversupply situation.

There seems to be a division between good sound fruit material and excellent fruit material in relation to pricing, eg \$1900 for Shiraz off young vines and up to \$8000 for the same variety from old vines. For the first time I feel the industry is valuing fruit with much more scrutiny and either awarding growers or penalising due to performance. This will ultimately lead to industry sustainability for the professional grower.

High temperatures above 37 degrees have been a rare commodity this season. With the cropping of young vineyards contributing to the overall total of estimated 45,000 tonnes, with many vineyards older

than 10 years averaging very low tonnage in the order of 3 tonnes per acre. The quality has been reported as being very good to excellent at this stage but overall a 20-30% reduction from estimated figures seems to be the story of the vintage. The big change to fruit production this year in McLaren Vale is the retained total acids in the berries. There have been very high quantities in T/A which augers well for the end quality wine product. The need for premium grapes continues which is sustainable for business. Next year the region's estimated tonnes will expand to the 55,000 plus range which will make McLaren Vale quite a significant player in the overall Australian figures.

Recycled water from Christies Beach will ensure these figures are met whilst the remaining Basin will have to make some significant changes in irrigation practises due to the State Government legislation, which was introduced prior to the 2002 season

Preliminary results from Viticare network survey

By Noel Ainsworth,
CRCV

Response rate: Of the 23 groups in the network, I received feedback from growers or contacts in 11 of these (48%). I feel that if we are to make sure that the participant groups in the network are responsible for and driving it's direction, that at least three quarters of groups need to be having a say over its future. Of the 50 groups known but not in the network, we received replies from growers or contacts in 17 of these (34%).

With all of that in mind, there have been more than 40 replies to the Viticare survey from both groups in the network and groups outside of the network.

While more feedback is wanted, particularly from groups in the network, some preliminary network grower/group results indicate that;

- 67% increased their awareness of the CRCV,
- 39% increased their activity in priority setting,
- 72% are receiving the service that they expected,
- 72% suggested that the newsletter was improving information ex-

change and that the preference was for articles on grower trials and grower experiences. Half of the grower regarded the obligation of four articles a year as too much with most of those preferring a more realistic obligation of two articles a year, and

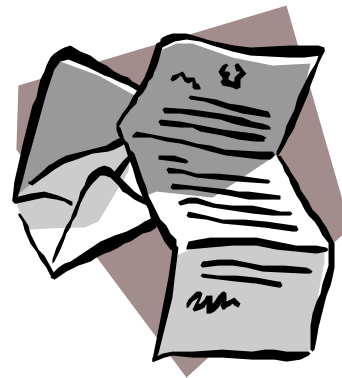
- 76% wanted the newsletter kept as is or put onto the CRCV website being available to all growers.

Seventeen percent reported unintentional side benefits of the Viticare network including a rekindling of enthusiasm for ongoing development of viticultural/industry skills, help being available when it was needed, gaining a lot of knowledge from other grower trials, links to other district chat groups and a greater understanding of irrigation management.

The most important roles for Viticare network to members in the future were to;

- Increase growers' awareness of viticultural information sources
- Encourage the sharing of infor-

Viticare™



mation between regions, and

- Improve growers understanding of new viticultural approaches through training.

When the responses from groups and growers not in the Viticare network were considered, the most common reasons for not getting involved were too many other things on, not enough time and we haven't gotten around to joining yet.

From outside of the network, the most important roles for Viticare network in the future were to;

- Improve growers understanding of new viticultural approaches through training
- Increase growers'

awareness of viticultural information sources

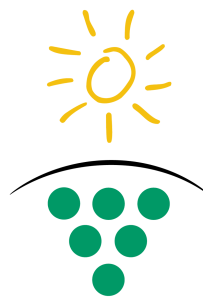
- Identify gaps in growers' knowledge that stops them adopting new practices, and
- Improve growers' awareness of Environmental Management Systems and On Farm Trial opportunities.

And finally those outside of the network suggested that while 63% weren't sure if they would join the network, 26% said that they would.

If you are unsure whether the contact for your groups has responded, just ask them. If you also want to play a part in the direction of the Viticare net-

.....accelerating the uptake of new technologies

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On Farm Trials – Major interest in RDI in the Riverland and Sunraysia

*By Phil Nicholas, Susan Byrne
and Bill Panagiotopoulos*

Now that several larger wine companies are using colour measurements to help determine price paid for red varieties, some growers are trying regulated deficit irrigation (RDI) to improve quality. RDI is most commonly used on Shiraz and vines are usually stressed between fruit set and veraison. RDI can be used to reduce vegetative growth and berry size, advance maturity and increase berry colour. However, if vines are over-stressed a large reduction in yield may occur.

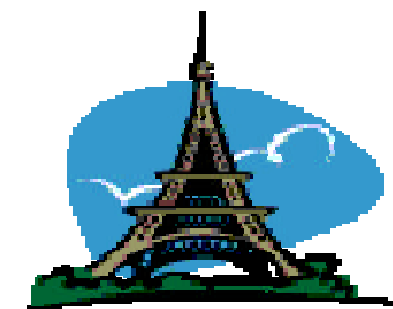
The successful application of RDI for a particular variety will be differ-

ent for each site, due to differences in soil type, rootstock and irrigation system. Different methodology may be applicable for different varieties. For these reasons, growers will need to conduct their own trials at each

site. It is planned to set up a range of On Farm Trials in the Riverland and Sunraysia this year to refine methodology for growers to use in setting up RDI trials in their own situations.



Lecture notice for those near Adelaide



On Wednesday 17th April, Mr Tony Spawton and Dr Larry Lockshin from the University of South Australia will be giving a lecture on “Contemporary Cross Fertilization: the wine sectors in Australia and France”.

It is to be held at 6.00pm at Brook-

man Hall, Brookman Building, UniSA, City East Campus, cnr North Terrace & Frome Road. Entrance fee is by gold coin donation. Please register by contacting Louise Barnes on phone (08) 8302 0215 or email: louise.barnes@unisa.edu.au