

COOPERATIVE
RESEARCH CENTRE
for
VITICULTURE



Growers sharing information with other growers

Inside this issue:

- Environmental Management Systems VERA workshop in SA* 1
- Growing Merlot at Langhorne Creek, SA* 1
- On Farm Trials, information exchange with NSW and GWRDC visits in VIC* 2
- Molybdenum Trials in the Adelaide Hills, SA* 2
- Snail control at Langhorne Creek, SA* 3
- New CRCV staff in Adelaide* 4
- Staff member moves on* 4

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.

Currency Creek Environmental Issues Workshop
by David Watkins (Currency Creek Grower, SA)

The Currency Creek Grape Growers Association (CCGGA) held a workshop on environmental issues associated with viticulture at the Currency Creek Winery Restaurant on Wed 8th May 2002.

Conducted by the Cooperative Research Centre for Viticulture's team of David Baker (Environmental Management Systems Officer) and Industry Development Leaders, Gayle Grieger and Gerard Hogan, CCGGA members spent a half-day discussing environmental issues associated with viticulture.

The newly developed Viticare Environmental Risk Assessment Tool (VERA) formed the backbone of the workshop proceedings and

proved a useful tool in identifying key issues of relevance.

CCGGA President David Watkins said "As wine grapegrowers, we are aware of our responsibilities to marry commercially viable production techniques with the need to ensure that we do not degrade the environment in which we are operating. Not only is this important for the society in which we all live, but also increasingly for our international market place."

"Workshops of this nature assist groups like ours to become aware of the important issues relating to the environment and to be proactive in developing en-



vironmentally sensible policies that still allow us to carry on our businesses."

Growing Merlot at Langhorne Creek, South Australia
by Andrew Bengier (Vineyard Manager, Bremerton Winery) and Rick Trezona

Perusal of many an Australian viticultural publication reveals widespread concern about the performance of Merlot. Many viticultural regions are currently carrying out research into identifying the cause of Merlot's problems and investigating means of overcoming these problems.

In response to this obser-

vation the Langhorne Creek Vine Improvement Committee decided to establish whether or not grapegrowers in Langhorne Creek are experiencing difficulties with Merlot. There are believed to be 350 hectares of bearing Merlot in Langhorne Creek. Vintage 2000 had 234 hectares of bearing Merlot producing a total of 1751 tonnes.

A questionnaire was compiled and circulated to all grapegrowers in the region. In all 14 replies have been received to date. Responses have been tabulated and the Committee is now considering its next move. (sorry, tables wouldn't import easily into text, ed)

Grape and Wine Research and Development Corporation, Visits On Farm Trial Sites in Yarra Valley by Natalie Laukart, (On-Farm Trials, National Coordinator, Victoria Institute for Horticultural Development, Knoxfield, Victoria)

On the 6th of May 2002 the Grape and Wine Research and Development Corporation (GWRDC) Board visited Agriculture Victoria's Institute for Horticultural Development. After a morning of excellent presentations on GWRDC-funded projects, the group visited a Participatory On Farm Trials (OFT) site in the Yarra Valley. Following a brief introduction and overview of the OFT (Viticare) program, what it involves, and what kind of trials are involved, Damien

de Castella (Area manager for Southern Victoria) described his experience in the OFT program. Damien explained his trial in evaluating Partial Rootzone Drying (PRD) against normal irrigation strategies for more effective water usage. Interestingly over two seasons, no differences could be demonstrated between PRD and normal irrigation regimes. Damien also showed us the many different types of trellis systems that Yarra Ridge boasts as well as the beautiful views

across almost all of the Yarra Valley. We'd like to thank Damien for his time and effort that went into the GWRDC Board visit.

Right-Natalie describing OFT
Below-Damien showing trellis systems



Molybdenum trials at Salem Bridge Wines by Barry Miller and Maarea Karetai, (Adelaide Hills, SA)

We began a molybdenum trial on Merlot D3V14 in our Adelaide Hills vineyard in 2000-2001, with a view to improving fruit set. The vines were about to enter their third growing season and were suffering from poor vigour. Sodium molybdate was sprayed, to the point of runoff, onto selected panels of vines at the rate of 300 grams per hectare. One spray was applied at the first emergence of the

new season's inflorescences in the trial's first year. Unfortunately due to Merlot having a very good set in 2000-2001 in the Adelaide Hills, no appreciable improvement was noted. In the second year (2001-2002) one spray was applied as before and a second spray was applied one week later. The 2001-2002 season was disastrous for fruit set in Merlot in the Adelaide Hills but the panels of vines sprayed

with Mo showed a huge improvement. The visual results were confirmed at harvest with the treated panels yielding significantly more fruit. The official results will be published at a later date.

We believe that we have found a way of significantly improving fruit set in Merlot on our block in poor years. I must thank the On-Farm Trials team for their assistance.



Barry with treated and untreated Merlot bunches of Veraison

Hunter Valley – On Farm Trials Meeting and Vineyard visits by Natalie Laukart, (Victoria Department of Natural Resources and Environment)

I had the privilege of attending the Hunter Valley On Farm Trials (OFT) Meeting on the 2nd May, 2002, where I met with 30 growers and researchers and presented a brief overview of the concepts and step-by-step approach to On Farm Trials. Specific examples of trials that are in progress in the Port

Phillip and other Victorian regions were also presented. Sharing information between regions is a vital part of the OFT project. The Hunter Valley seems to have some specific fruit rot issues that do not occur in many of the other winegrowing regions. Tony Somers presented information and results on

trials in progress in the Hunter Valley, especially emphasising the issues of fruit rot and its management. Dr. Percy Wong also gave an overview of mulch application and of policies to minimise the risk of spread of Phylloxera. It was also an obvious concern that not only wine-grape growers but also

Hunter Valley – OFT Meeting and Vineyard visits (Continued from page 2)

other industries need to adopt these policies. We got some interesting feedback during our panel session where Erica McKay, a consultant from a private research group ICAM, Eric Love and Chris Rochfort, from the Centre for Organic Resource Enterprises, Dr Percy Wong a Principal Research Scientist with NSW Agriculture's Organic Waste Recycling Unit

Garry Kimbel, a Quality Assurance Consultant, and I sat on the panel.

The OFT trial concept stimulated a lot of interest and it is likely that further work will develop on the use of composted grape marc in the future.

I finished my stay in the Hunter Valley with a drive from the Lower Hunter

(Cooranbong) all the way to the Upper Hunter (Denman). Chris Haywood, NSW Agriculture, supplied me with interesting observations and information about individual vineyards and their history along the way. I'd like to thank the growers and researchers of OFT in the Hunter Valley for the opportunity to speak and visit with them.

Snail Pace – Trials to control snail infestation in a Langhorne Creek vineyard by Andrew Bengier, Vineyard Manager, Bremerton Winery, SA

Snails aren't known for their pace, but in our vineyards the little blighter's have managed to keep up with the maturing vines as they progress through successive vintages. Aside from the damage they are capable of doing to emerging buds come the spring, they are an unsightly and unwelcome addition to machine harvested grapes.

Because we sometimes experience floodwaters through our vineyards here in Langhorne Creek, any inroads we make into controlling snail numbers are often undone by the introduction of a replacement floating population. The main snail species being introduced by flooding appears to be the brown garden snail. Another contributing factor to snail population increases appears to be the building of limestone rubble roads through the vineyard. The main species introduced in this manner is the Italian white snail.

Over the past four years we have been attempting to re-

duce snail infestation using a combined chemical and mechanised eradication program.

The chemical component involves the trialing of various forms of copper-based fungicides as a means of discouraging the snails from migrating to the vine canopies during spring. In our non-frost prone blocks we have found that leaving tall cereal cover crops standing well into spring gives the snails an alternative above ground site to migrate to.

The mechanical component involves using a hydraulic powered cane sweeper fitted with heavy rubber flaps and a mulcher mower. The sweeper is set so as to give the vine trunks a hefty jolt that usually dislodges any snails that have attached themselves to the vines and then sweeps them into the midrow. The midrow is then mown with the mulcher. In blocks with severe infestations the mulchings are then buried using either a rotary hoe or disc (depending on soil type) and then rolled

flat. The intention being to hopefully suppress the hatching of any snail eggs spread about by the mulching process.

As a last resort we still rely on snail baits to deal with serious infestations. Baits are usually deposited at the base of each vine and vineyard post in a problem area after rainfall (snails tend to head back to the ground after rain).

Or after the snails have been dislodged from the vines by belting the trunks with a length of hefty poly pipe attached to an indignant vineyard worker, (who must surely be visualising the boss every time they strike a blow). The baits seem successful in preventing snails returning to the vines but it is unknown whether egg loadings are reduced by baiting adult snails.

Last year we got scientific and allowed a chemical company to trial a new copper-based chemical in one of our problem blocks. The population counts

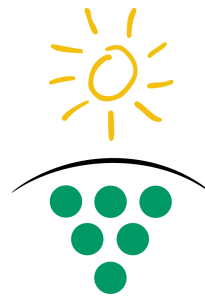
“the snails have been dislodged from the vines by belting the trunks with a length of hefty poly pipe attached to an indignant vineyard worker”

were done on harvest day and the data is presently being compiled into a report. Hopefully I'll be able to share that report with you all in a later edition.

Whilst we accept that we may never be able to completely eradicate snails from our vineyard we have so far been able to greatly reduce the number we see in the grapes we machine harvest. The challenge now is to find the most economically and environmentally sustainable method to continue achieving this outcome.

.....accelerating the uptake of new technologies

For further information,
contact the newsletter editor,
Gerard Hogan, phone (08) 8303 9432,
Fax (08) 8303 9449, e-mail to
hogan.gerard@saugov.sa.gov.au, or by
writing to PO Box 154 Glen Osmond SA
5064.



COOPERATIVE
RESEARCH CENTRE
for
VITICULTURE

**For the latest on
research results,
annual reports,
newsletters or pro-
ject briefs, contact
us on the web at
www.crcv.com.au**

New Industry Development Leader for CRCV by Gerard Hogan

Hello, my name is Gerard Hogan and I have recently joined the CRC for Viticulture as an Industry Development Leader. I am an environmental scientist by qualification with Post Graduate qualifications in land management and ecology. Much of my employment has been in the areas of agriculture and the environment. My last role was with TransportSA where I worked in their environmental unit on Environmental Management Systems. Before this I came from Primary Industries and Resources SA, where I worked in a number of roles for approximately 5 years. I had previously come from the Queensland sugar industry where I worked in the extension services and Integrated Pest Management (IPM) areas. For those of you who knew David Braybrook and the nature of his work I will be his replacement. I am based at the CRCV office, at the Waite Campus in Adelaide. My role includes developing industry, and following in David's IPM footsteps whilst working on three projects. These projects include half of my time on the Viticare Network and the rest of my time divided equally between Research to Practice workshops and Environmental Manage-

ment Systems work. I certainly will look forward to working with you and listening to your comments and suggestions. My contact details are found at the top of this page.



Industry Development Leader
Gerard Hogan

Newsletter changes

You may have noticed the newsletter is slightly late this month, and importing text into MicroSoft Publisher hasn't yet been mastered! So, an article with a table is incomplete, sorry Andrew Bengner and Rick Trezona! This is due to the fact that the previous newsletter editor, Noel Ainsworth has moved on and his expertise has left us! However please bear with us, as in the interim Gerard Hogan will be acting as newsletter editor till Noel's replacement is appointed. Next newsletter hopefully will be an improvement.

Noel Ainsworth moves on

For those of you who are not aware Noel Ainsworth, the Viticare Coordinator has recently moved on. He was jack of the cold weather and headed for the hot and humid conditions of Queensland. *Didn't anyone tell him last Queensland summer was one of the hottest on record!* Noel will be working in a similar role to what he was doing with the CRCV, ie running a programme, but in a lot higher capacity. He will be running the World Wide Fund for Nature's (WWF) Northern Australian programme, based in the WWF Brisbane office. So we can be rest assured the Great Barrier Reef and Kakadu are in capable hands! Noel will best be remembered for setting up the Viticare Network for the CRCV. Other things of significance were his strategic planning skills, his attention to detail and his friendly mannerisms. Noel had a small send off in Adelaide on the 10th May where Jim Hardie presented Noel with a small gift and a thank you for his contribution to the CRCV. If anyone is interested in contacting Noel his details can be obtained from Gerard Hogan (see top of this page). Good luck and all the best in the future Noel, -watch out for the cyclones!