



62nd Annual Lodi Grape Day

Co-sponsored with Lodi Chamber of Commerce

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 4, 2014

HUTCHINS STREET SQUARE

KIRST AND CRETE HALLS

125 South Hutchins Street, Lodi CA 95240



3.5 CE Hours approved by
California Certified Crop
Adviser Program

California Department of
Pesticide Regulation has
approved 1.5 hours Continuing
Education

- 7:30 am** **Registration/Continuing Education Signups & Coffee**
- 8:00 am** **Mechanized Pruning System Field Trials**
Paul Verdegaal, UC Farm Advisor, San Joaquin County
- 8:20 am** **Mite Control Considerations for Effective Use of Current Strategies & Resistance**
Walt Bentley, UC Extension Entomologist Emeritus
- 9:10 am** **Use of Adapted Cultural Practices for Effective Management of Grapevine Trunk Diseases**
Phillipe Rolshausen, Ph.D., Cooperative Extension Specialist, Dept. of Plant Pathology, UC Riverside
- 9:35** **Vineyard Establishment Considerations and the UC Cost Study**
Karen Klonsky, Ph.D., Extension Specialist in Dept. of Agricultural and Resource Economics, UC Davis
- 10:05 am** **Break**
- 10:15** **Update on Surface and Ground Water Monitoring Regulatory Proposals**
Jennifer Spaletta, President LDGGA and Attorney-at-Law
- 11:00 am** **Nitrogen Management Practices and Considerations**
Terry Prichard, Ph.D., Extension Irrigation Specialist Emeritus, Dept. of Land, Air and Water Resources, UC Davis
- 11:40 am** **Tasting**
- 12:00 noon** **Lunch (tickets \$25.00/person*)**
- 12:30 pm** **Luncheon Speaker: *To be announced***

* Lunch Tickets are available for \$25.00/person and can be purchased at the door during the program.

As 2013 closes many think about what was, what could have been and what maybe should have been. Preparation for 2014 can begin with reviewing how the past season did go.

The season began just slightly ahead of the average gauged by Chardonnay budbreak, by about 2 to 3 days. Vine development sped up significantly as moderately warm temperatures and dry spring conditions followed. The previous fall/winter provided some heavy and steady rains that helped replenish deep soil moisture. The rains stopped mid-winter and only one substantial rain followed in February. Vine growth seemed to be rapid, but not excessively vigorous as dry weather and good growth depleted the available soil moisture. This allowed growers to control vine growth to some degree but resulted in additional costs to irrigate.

Even with good deep moisture from the early rains, many growers applied late winter irrigations as the upper soil layers dried out. These dry soil conditions forced everyone to irrigate more than average. Canopy growth was similar to last year, but after two dry years there were more reports of what might be called "drought induced" potassium deficiency. Still, early cluster counts indicated a good harvest, but after the huge crop in 2012 dramatically high yields were not expected; at least not by most people, including this humbled advisor.

The summer remained warm, but relatively mild. Afternoon maximums were above average, but morning minimums tended to be well below average. And there was the added curiosity that on less than a handful of mornings was there any with dew present! There were only seven days with maximums above 100° F (on average 17 occur during a season). This one really hot spell was limited to the period from June 27 to July 4th.

Because of the early start and the warm growing conditions, harvest began very early for early season varieties such as Sauvignon blanc, Muscat blanc, Verdelho and Chardonnay, around August 1st. For various reasons and many theories, by many people, mid-season and late season varieties stalled in their maturity development and sugar accumulation. It seems the hot spell may have stalled many vines and maybe affected varieties not as far along in maturity. (The surprise was the crop was as big or bigger than last year's crop.) Dry soil conditions limited both vine activity and potassium uptake. And on top of all, a mid-harvest rain on Sep 21st of about 0.4 inches was a severe setback to sugar accumulation. Some Zinfandel blocks that were ready to harvest at 25 °Brix dropped to 22 °Brix or less.

As harvest progressed it became evident that most varieties and most sites had a very big crop; in many cases bigger than 2012. Generally, vines that have a large crop in one year tend to have lighter crops the following, but it appears the vines liked what happened this past year and don't read the accepted viticulture literature. There were exceptions as always, but in general many vineyards were 10% to 20% (or more) above last year; last year being about 20% to 30% above average. Some varieties such as Chardonnay and Syrah may have been slightly on the lower side, while some such as Merlot and especially Zinfandel were consistently on the high side.

Even though the season started very early it wrapped up about on average, with many growers finishing mid to late October and most done by November 1st. Seasonal Growing Degree Days (GDD) for 2013 ended with a total for the year about 100 DD above the long term average; just into a borderline region IV.

Prices received by growers weakened significantly after last year's exuberant rally. It does look like this crop will significantly fill many wineries' tank capacity. Partly because of that it was not uncommon to see prices drop \$200 to \$300 per ton compared to 2012.

As last year, the warm days and very cool nights of 2013, with many mornings of very apparent low relative humidity did result in excellent colors and very good flavors. Total acids were again slightly lower than recent years but still moderate and about average.

Summer bunch rot or Sour rot was minimal again this year, especially compared to 2011. Powdery mildew showed up late, but did cause problems and concerns in control for the usual suspects such as Chardonnay.

Spider mites did become evident, but fairly late in the season and somewhat more scattered than powdery mildew problems. Mites were difficult to control in some locations, but overall not severe. Vine Mealy bug (VMB) continues to spread, but growers are effectively controlling it. As VMB is effectively controlled, it seems Grape Leafhoppers and Variegated Leafhoppers continue to be much less of a problem.

VMB is still spreading throughout the County, but more slowly now that it seems there are good materials for control and most growers are adjusting spray programs to prevent problems as an ongoing cost of production. It is good to remain on the lookout and aware of any new infestations, often indicated by sooty mold or excessive honeydew in clusters, spurs or cordons. A high degree of ant activity in and around vines can also indicate problem spots. Good places to begin looking before harvest are where birds tend to roost.

The Light Brown Apple Moth (LBAM) continues to spread throughout the County and the state. Spotted Wing Drosophila (SWD) has increased costs for local fresh fruit growers, but fortunately it appears SWD doesn't do well in vineyard microclimates. The Brown Marmorated Stink bug (BMSB) is currently only a problem in the Northeast U.S., but is a major concern for everyone on the horizon. BMSB was reported to be established and spreading in downtown Sacramento, and although 30 miles away, is of concern. There are reports of a new leaf hopper species, the Virginia Creeper Leaf Hopper (VCLH). This pest from the East by way of Canada bears watching.

Increased reports of weed resistance make it more important than ever to monitor and to control some of the more noxious and troublesome weeds BEFORE THEY SEED. Besides Mares tail and Fleabane, star thistle is also more of a problem along roadsides and it requires attention or it will dominate mowed areas, row middles and habitats. The herbicide Rely (glufosinate) has been in short supply for two years but may be more available in 2014, and some new herbicides are becoming available or soon to be.

Controlling weeds before they are large or have seeded and making repeat applications can make a big difference in control and resistance development. Because resistance, although a real problem, is still resistance, not immunity, and to be controlled. Proper rates and calibration, good coverage, and appropriate timing of applications are important.

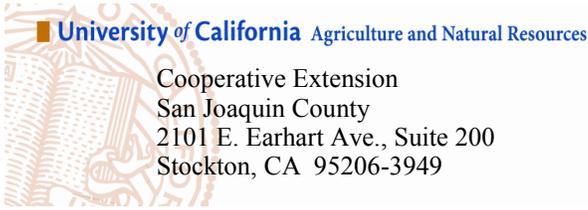
After a second big crop and a continuing weak economy, wine sales are still increasing, if slowly. Demand increased for many varieties such as Malbec, Pinot grigio, Petite Sirah, and Zinfandel (especially as red). Whites such as Verdelho, Viognier, and Vermentino, in addition to the old standards of Chardonnay, Colombard and even Sauvignon blanc, are of interest if the quality is there.

In spite of increasing regulations, control costs, drought conditions, and a beaten up general economy, 2014 still holds promise for local growers. For the long term, Lodi and San Joaquin County are still "a good place to grow grapes".

Good luck in 2014

Fall/Winter Checklist

- No nitrogen should be applied now, but potassium now (or early next year) is okay. It won't "move" like nitrogen. To get full benefit of compost, it needs to be disked in.
- Make a note of any problem weed species that may be increasing.
- Mark any vines with little to no growth and monitor spring growth with fruit quality next year for possible removal.
- Sign up for your Water Coalitions to comply with new Ag Waste Discharge Program formerly your Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program (formerly Ag Waiver Discharge) permit/ membership.
- Update your air pollution mitigation plan if you have 100 acres or more in a single vineyard.
- Also, review your pesticide use reports and get everything up to date as there is continued interest to keep agriculture "accountable" for problems real and perceived.
- Check for locations near riparian areas, trees and other bird roosting sites for VMB. Focus on these areas next spring in any VMB control program. Lorsban (chlorpyrifos) is still an option for a late winter application, but be careful of sprays before any late winter/early spring storms, especially near natural drains and waterways.
- Gophers, voles and squirrel activity are still common and may deserve attention with baits, gas cartridges, fumigant pellets (usually better in spring), trapping, shooting, or a combination of several of the methods. Remember ground squirrels are fair game; tree squirrels require a depredation permit. Owl boxes can help stabilize rodent populations, but do not control them.
- If preparing to apply herbicide, irrigate after and maybe before to "set" the residual as best you can until rain arrives.
- Apply a good irrigation (12 to 24 hours or so, depending on the soil) before an expected rain.



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62nd Annual Lodi Grape Day



Paul Verdegaal, Farm Advisor
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Tuesday, February 4, 2014

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