

## STRATEGIC PLANNING AND BUDGET MEETING OUTCOMES

The 2013-2017 Strategic Planning and Budget Setting Meeting was held 5th December 2012 at the Catholic Club Yoogali.

The meeting was attended by 30 constituted grape growers meaning that a quorum was reached for the meeting to discuss the forthcoming years budget, fees and charges and the 5 year strategic plan.

Growers moved to adopt the Strategic Plan for 2013-2017 and the accompanying budget that was circulated to all growers in October 2012.

The statutory fees and charges generated a lot of debate amongst attendees with the Board proposing to reduce the fee for 2013 to \$3.50 per tonne of fresh weight MIA winegrapes. Growers in general argued against the motion stating that the Board could always look to return excess funds to producers following the collection of the fees each year and that keeping the fee high provided the Board with more flexibility in case the region suffered a decline in production due to natural disaster or disease pressure.

The motion to set the fee at \$3.50 per tonne was moved and voted down by the majority of growers in attendance at the meeting.

The growers then moved to keep the statutory fees and charges at the rate of \$3.90 per tonne for the forthcoming vintage.

The Board will again look to secure Agency Agreements with wineries to collect this fee in 2013 with the majority of wineries doing so in 2012 and received an Agency Fee of 5%. This charge was recommended by the Riverina Winemakers Association for 2012 and comes off the bottom line of the fees and charges collected by the winery.

The meeting was provided with an overview of the current market conditions based the level of activity a number of wineries in the region are showing trying to secure grapes for the 2013 vintage.

The Industry Development Officer Kristy Bartrop provided growers with a thorough overview of the GWRDC Grassroots activity and sought input from the growers to possible future extension activity with the available funding for the next 5 years.

Growers with suggestions on possible regional projects should contact Kristy at the office on 6962 3944 or send her an email, [kbartrop@wgmb.net.au](mailto:kbartrop@wgmb.net.au)

## CHAIN OF RESPONSIBILITY - GROWERS/DRIVERS BE AWARE

It has been reported to the Board that a regionally based winery has written to growers stating that they or their grape transporter may be asked to sign a document in the event of a breach of the loading limits that may occur during vintage. The form is designed to have the effect to exempt the winery from any financial liability in relation to the winery's part of the Chain of Responsibility should the breach be acted upon by the Roads and Maritime Services (RMS).

The RMS (formerly Roads and Traffic Authority) has advised the Board that such an activity is prohibited and an offence under the *Road Transport (General) Act 2005*.

Chapter 1, Part 1, Section 9 of the Act states: *A term of any contract or agreement that purports to exclude, limit or modify the operation of this Act or of any provision of this Act is void to the extent that it would otherwise have that effect.*"

The Board is seeking comment from the winery that has sent this correspondence and has asked that they seek formal legal advice prior to issuing a new notice to their grower base. The Board wishes to thank the grower that provided this anonymously to our office.

### WHAT'S INSIDE

### Page

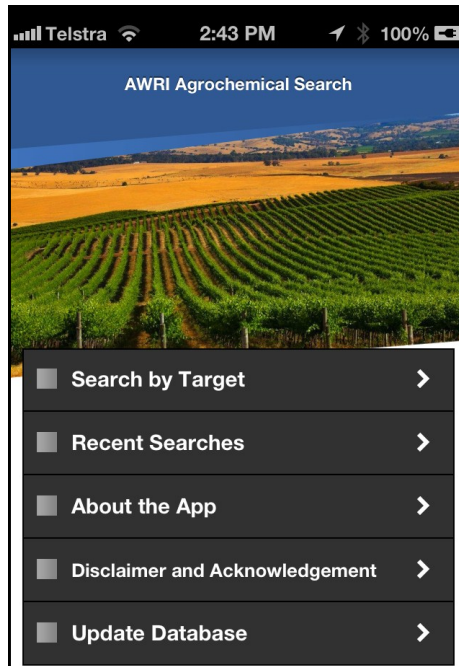
Strategic Planning & Budget Meeting Outcomes	1
Chain of Responsibility - Growers/Driver be aware	1
AWRI launches smart phone application for industry	2
Board Activities Report	2
Summary of Final Report into Young Vine Decline in NSW	3-5
TWE Says no to Alcohol Floor price	5
Grassroots Vineyard Mulching Trial Update	6-7
Penalties to be enforced at Casella Wines for Mass breach	8
Workplace Health & Safety	8
Important dates for your diary	8

## AWRI LAUNCHES SMARTPHONE APPLICATION FOR INDUSTRY

The Australian Wine Research Institute (AWRI) agrochemical for use in the production of grapes for launched an application for all growers and export wine, and any restrictions on their use. winemakers recently. It should assist growers that use smartphones.

More and more users of the AWRI's agrochemical online database "Dog Book" are accessing the information using their smart phones and tablets. To make the information much easier to use on mobile device, the AWRI has developed an agrochemical app for iOS and Android.

The application is a must for Australian grape growers and winemakers in the business of producing and processing grapes for export as wine. It enables fast identification of the preferred



The application enables users to select the target and growth stage of your vines, lists active constituents based on recommended withholding period for export grapes and lists chemical products available.

Download the AWRI agrochemical application for free from iTunes or Google Play today and help avoid the bite of agrochemical residues whilst staying on the move.

For further information please contact the AWRI by email: [viticulture@awri.com.au](mailto:viticulture@awri.com.au) or by telephone : 08 8313 660.

Growers can call into our office for assistance in loading the program.

## BOARD ACTIVITIES REPORT

- Meeting with the Minister: the Board has yet to receive a response from the Minister in relation to her visit to the region to meet with growers.
- HACCP Auditing across the region has been completed. If you have not undertaken this for the forthcoming season please contact our development staff.
- Phylloxera signage at Beckom has had to be changed to reflect the removal of a grapevine material disposal bin by the RMS.
- The Board is assisting a grower pursue outstanding grape payments from 2011. IMPORTANT that all growers monitor their payments closely.
- The elections for the Board positions are likely to be held in 2013, after requests to the relevant authorities have failed to receive a response that will allow for these to occur in 2012.
- The Board reviewed its financial position and moved to reduce the fees and charges for 2013 by \$0.50 per tonne. This revised position was put to growers but not supported on 5th Dec 2012.
- A meeting with the Small Business Commissioner, local association representatives was coordinated by the Board. The SBC was concerned with the impacts of the WET rebate on the State's industry.
- The IDO attended GWRDC planning meeting in Adelaide and was advised that this region would be eligible for up to \$125,000 in funding for the next 5 years for extension activities.
- Discussions on the future of viticulture extension staff in NSW occurred at the NSW Wine Industry Association and a NSW DPI convened meeting at the Board office. The NSW Government is proposing to cut the 6 NSW extension staff to 3 contracted positions in the next 7 months.
- The final session of the Next Bunch Training Program was conducted at the Board offices.
- The Board agreed to fund the much needed flyover of the region to update the images of vineyards held by the Board. The imagery was last captured in March 2008.
- The CEO attended the WGGGA Annual General Meeting held in Adelaide. The WGGGA advised that on behalf of industry it had written to the ACCC in relation to the practice of colour testing and pricing in red winegrapes.
- 2013 will be the Board's 80th year of operations. Growers decided at the Strategic Planning and Budget meeting to hold a family BBQ luncheon to celebrate this later in 2013. More information will be forthcoming.



## SUMMARY OF FINAL REPORT ON YOUNG VINE DECLINE IN NSW

**Dr. Melanie Weckert, NSW DPI Research Plant Pathologist, Theme Leader Vine Health, National Wine & Grape Industry Centre,**

During the past fifteen years or so, too many newly planted NSW grafted grapevines have been dying soon after planting or have been extremely slow growing and low yielding for years before dying, see Figure (a).



In 2006, Leo Quirk (NSW DPI extension officer) and I sent survey questionnaires to over 500 wine grape growers. The replies showed that over 65% had experienced this sort of young vine decline. Many invited us to inspect their diseased young vines and we had our first real view of the extent of the problem. Growers were losing a lot of money. However, some 'experts' were telling us that the problem was caused by 'poor planting procedure'. This was unlikely because growers told us that they used exactly the same methods as they had successfully used many times in the past.

### Some comments from these growers:

*"..of 6,000 grafted grapevine rootlings planted .... 1000 were diseased.."*

*".. too many growers are losing money constantly – the vines are extremely slow growing in the early years, and then they often have to be removed and replaced after a few years."*

*"...the next season... (after planting)...we had about 15 -20% not grow or severely stunted. ... there seems to have been a lot of this sort of problem about."*

*"My 30 acre patch... (planted 2002)...of Chardonnay lost 500 vines in 2004. About another 100 vines in 2005."*

*"The first time that I remember seeing .. (young vine decline) ... was back in 1992 when it appeared on*

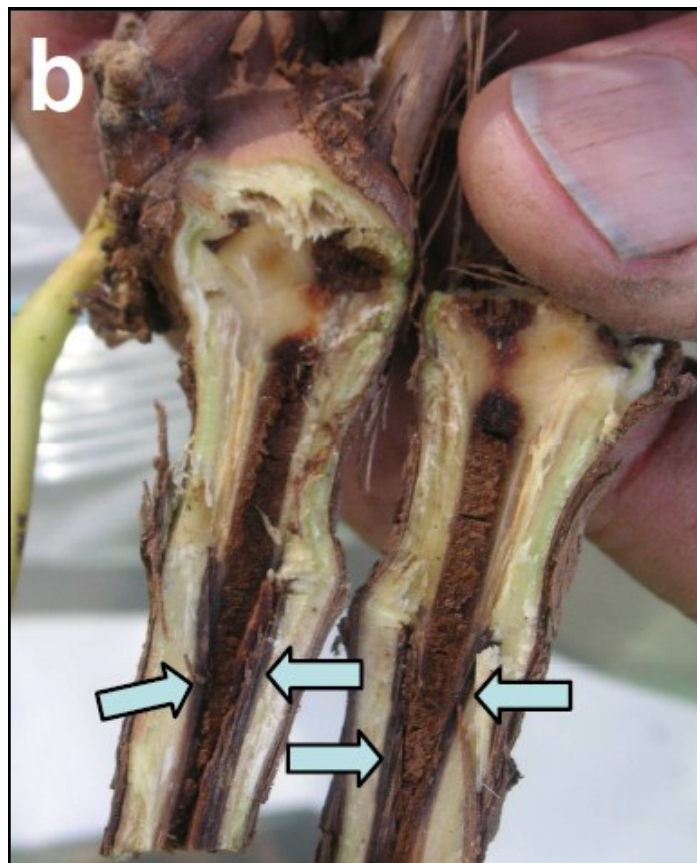
*young Chardonnay rootstock vines.... lost close to a third in the two following years."*

*"...vines on rootstock planted back in 1987 that are still dying back and have done so all the years since."*

We decided to seek funding from the GWRDC to try to find the cause of this disease. We named the disease Young Vine Decline (YVD) because it looked similar to YVD found in many viticultural regions world-wide. After a few years of sometimes frustrating detective work we found that, in our case, YVD was caused by two fungal pathogens present in planting stock, particularly rootstocks. One of the pathogens, *Botryosphaeria* (Bot), infected canes from mother vines in rootstock source blocks and the other, *Cylindrocarpon* (Cyl), was introduced from the nursery environment, including field nursery soil.

### Results of our study

Generally, the scion (i.e. above the graft union) was clean (free of pathogens) but pathogenic fungi were found in the oldest (i.e. the innermost) xylem of the rootstocks of the diseased plants (figures b & c) indicating that the infection occurred before, or very early in, the propagation process.



(Continued on page 4)

## SUMMARY OF FINAL REPORT ON YOUNG VINE DECLINE IN NSW

(Continued from page 3)



Bot was isolated from the oldest xylem of rootstock stems and roots, sometimes extending up to the graft union (the xylem is the water conducting tissue that forms the wood in trunks, canes and roots). Cyl was isolated from the roots, and from the oldest xylem of rootstock stem close to the roots.

Both Bot and Cyl can also infect mature or young vines on their own:

- Bot causes 'Bot Canker' when it infects cordons through pruning wounds.
- Cyl causes 'Blackfoot' in vines when it enters the roots from contaminated soil. However, in combination they cause more serious disease symptoms.

The fact that Bot and Cyl were isolated from the oldest xylem, and that the infection was found throughout the rootstock stems, indicated that these fungi must have been acquired before they were planted in the affected vineyards.

Many NSW growers have said that the diseased vines looked "quite healthy" to them before planting. This means that the vines probably also looked perfectly acceptable to nursery staff before they were freighted out to the vineyards. Unless the stems are cut open and examined, the symptoms do not generally show until the vines are planted in the vineyard.

Unfortunately, we found that applying composts or biochar or fungicidal soil drenches did not cause recovery of the diseased grapevines. This is most

likely because the Cyl destroys the root system and prevents the plant from absorbing water and nutrients, so increasing the damage caused by the Bot fungal hyphae and toxins.

### **Where do the Bot/Cyl YVD fungi originate?**

Our research has shown that Bot first infects rootstock mother vines and thus the canes harvested from them. Infected cuttings may then contaminate others during hydration and/or storage in moist conditions in the nursery. Correctly applied Hot Water Treatment (HWT) of the cuttings (50° C for 30 minutes) kills the fungus and so reduces this risk but many growers are not asking for their cuttings to be hot water treated.

Cyl then enters the basal callus in the cuttings when they are rooted in contaminated nursery soil. Cyl might also be present in some rootstock cuttings.

### **Conclusion**

There is no cure for Bot/Cyl induced YVD. YVD affected vineyards cannot recover with management practices reducing stress (e.g. composts or biochar), or by application of fungicide soil drenches.

The best approach is to avoid buying infected propagated vines. Ask your supplying nursery to use HWT on the canes immediately before propagation.

Helen Waite (NWGIC grapevine nursery expert) advises that nurseries should allow the cuttings to come to ambient temperature before moving them from cold storage to HWT tanks (this may take 24 hours or more). If cold cuttings are hot water treated the large temperature differential may cause fatal shock. It is also essential that the cutting bags/bins, while returning to ambient temperature, are ventilated to allow oxygen to reach the cuttings but without drying out.

Nursery field site soil must be free of Cyl, so the nursery should use some method of fumigation. NWGIC nematode expert Dr. Loothfar Rahman has published methods for biofumigation using brassicas (e.g. mustard). Brassica biofumigation reduces not only soil parasitic nematodes but a New Zealand study by Carolyn Bleach in 2010 showed that it also decreases soil Cyl (*Cylindrocarpon*).

When growers purchase new grapevine planting

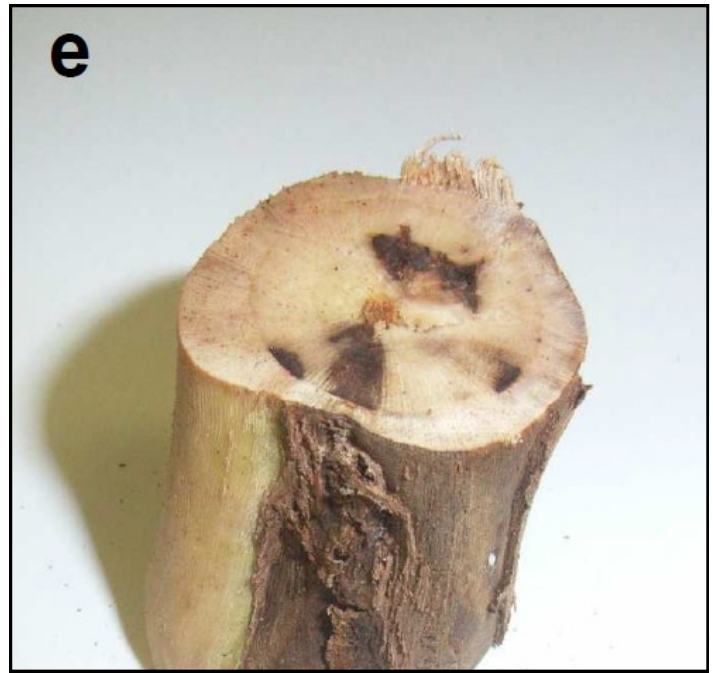


SUMMARY OF FINAL REPORT ON YOUNG VINE DECLINE IN NSW

(Continued from page 4)

material, it is important, before planting, to check the health of the vines carefully by cutting the stems below the graft, through the graft union and above the graft. Dark spots or wedges in the stem mean that the vine is probably diseased, see Figures (d), (e) & (f).

**Acknowledgements:** We are very grateful for the support from the many NSW wine grape growers who answered the questionnaire, invited us onto their



vineyards, supplied samples of diseased roots or rootstock stems and allowed their vineyards to be included in our field trial work. We also are most grateful to the Wine Grapes Marketing Board for their support over the years. The NWGIC 'Wine Growing Futures project: *Young Vine Decline*' was jointly funded by the Grape & Wine Research Development Corporation, N.S.W.; Department of Primary Industries and Charles Sturt University. Helen Waite is the

NWGIC expert on nursery practice and supplied information on proper nursery practice. Dr. Loothfar Rahman is the NWGIC expert on nematodes and use of brassicas for biofumigation.

[melanie.weckert@dpi.nsw.gov.au](mailto:melanie.weckert@dpi.nsw.gov.au) (02 69332720).

National Wine and Grape Industry Centre (NWGIC), Wagga Wagga, NSW.

TREASURY WINE ESTATES SAYS NO TO ALCOHOL PRICE FLOOR

[www.smh.com.au](http://www.smh.com.au) 30/11/12

Public health campaigns on the dangers of excessive drinking were more effective than governments imposing a minimum floor price on alcohol, the chief executive of wine maker and bottler Treasury Wine Estates says.

David Dearie said he did not believe a minimum price would stop problem drinking and it was unfair to penalise the majority of people who drank responsibly.

"I don't believe a minimum floor price would address the social and health associated with excessive alcohol consumption," Mr Dearie said in Sydney on Thursday.



## GRASSROOTS VINEYARD MULCHING TRIAL UPDATE

**Jason Cappello**  
**Extension Viticulturist, Griffith**  
**NSW Department of Primary Industries**

On Thursday November 22<sup>nd</sup> a field walk was held to demonstrate to local farmers how a project which has grape marc applied as mulch in different treatments undervine is progressing.



Sensors setup to install in the soil to monitor temperatures.

The Riverina area has a large volume of wine grape marc produced but growers in the area are not favourable toward the product, as historically issues have occurred with in row germination of seeds amongst other negative experiences. It has been reported that other districts are having great success with the product and this needs to be proven to the Regions growers by an infield trial of the product.

What is being done as part of the project -

1. No treatment to vines
2. Grape marc applied at approx. 100t/ha to achieve a mulch layer
3. Grape marc applied at approx. 100t/ha with added mixed NPK fertiliser at 250kg/ha
4. Grape marc applied at approx. 50t/ha to achieve a ½ rate mulch layer
5. Grape marc with added chicken manure/litter applied at approx. 50t/ha

6. Mixed NPK fertiliser applied at 250kg/ha with no grape marc applied

Attendees at the event were provided with a run down on the projects progress, aim and outcomes looking to be achieved. A field walk in the vineyard allowed the attendees to witness the application treatments made in the vineyard and also see how these impacted on vine root growth, soil moisture holding and weed management.

Following the recent rain the soil profile moisture has been filled full to capacity. Under the thicker grape marc mulch layer - 100t/ha (equivalent to 4 semitrailer loads) active white fresh roots were seen near the top of the soil in abundance compared to the untreated treatment. Also soil moisture content was highest in the thicker grape marc mulch treatment plot.

Whilst the thick application of grape marc requires a large amount of product, it is showing that it would be suitable option for use in vineyard area sections which annually underperform from either moisture or nutrient holding capacity, as oppose to applying the rate across an entire vineyard.



Marc applied 25-09-12 (Growth stage 4)



GRASSROOTS VINEYARD MULCHING TRIAL UPDATE



Attendees at the grape marc project farm walk held 22nd November 2012



Photo of marc treated soil, showing an abundance of fine white vine roots growing close to the soil surface



Photo of nil treatment showing limited fine white roots growing close to the soil surface



## PENALTIES TO BE ENFORCED AT CASELLA FOR MASS BREACH DELIVERIES

The Wine Grapes Marketing Board has been contacted by staff from Casella Wines in relation to the introduction of their new intake policy and how they will manage overloaded vehicles for the vintage.

Following from an extensive audit of all deliveries to and from the Casella Wines site, the winery has revised current policies and procedures for the delivery of overloaded trucks, as this was a major issue identified by the Roads and Maritime Services (RMS, Formerly RTA).

Casella wines has worked closely with the RMS and sought legal advice to assist with the development of a new policy which will now see overloaded trucks issued with fines equal to the fines that drivers would receive from the RMS for committing the same breach.

**Casella has the following structure of fines:**

### GROSS MASS LIMIT & BENEFIT OF THE DOUBT

- all trucks up to 2.9% overload accepted – no fine

### MINOR RISK

- Trucks that are between 3 and 4.9% overloaded will be fined (\$397)

### SUBSTANTIAL RISK

- Trucks that are between 5 and 19.9% overloaded will be fined (\$960)\*

### SEVERE RISK

- Trucks 20% plus will not be accepted over the weighbridge and the RMS may be notified.

\* If a vehicle is in receipt of more than 3 'substantial risk'

fines, 'severe risk' penalties will apply.

The key message being that the Gross Mass Limit is the maximum weight not the target weight. The perishable nature of the goods being carted makes control in such cases extremely difficult. The Casella Wines policy is aimed at not rewarding or encouraging Mass breaches.

Fines are issued to growers in the case where grapes are delivered to the winery as part of supply agreements (including Riverina). Casella Wines will fine transport companies, where that transport company is directly contracted by Casella Wines to transport fruit to the winery.

It is recommended that those growers who are responsible for organising their own transport liaise directly with transport operators to ensure each person involved within the Chain of Responsibility is made aware of their obligations and who will be held accountable for any fines for Mass breach offences.

Fines collected will be donated to charity as Casella Wines are undertaking this new policy to encourage appropriate loading behaviour. This exercise is the first version that the RMS will be monitoring closely and auditing again in 2013 to see if industry practice has improved or if further penalties are required to further discourage overloading.

Casella Wines will be providing more information in relation to this matter to their contracted growers prior to the commencement of vintage.

The Board encourages safe loading practices for the benefit of all partners in the chain of responsibility.

## WORKPLACE HEALTH AND SAFETY - THINK SAFE - BE SAFE - ACT SAFE

Growers need to be aware of the risks of persons entering your property to take winegrape samples during the season.

The Board is aware that DeBortoli Wines have been very active this season seeking details from their grower

base in relation to any potential hazards or risks on farm that their staff should be aware of.

Please communicate any concerns that you have directly with your winery, in writing. The Board hopes all growers have a safe season.

### IMPORTANT DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

WGMB Office Closure (dates inclusive)	Monday 24th December 2012 - Friday 4th January 2013
Yenda Grape Growers Association	Tue 15th Jan, Yenda Diggers Club, 7:30pm
Hanwood Grape Growers Association	Wed 16th Jan, Hanwood Sports Club, 7:30pm

WINE GRAPES MARKETING BOARD - proudly serving winegrape producers since 1933  
182 Yambil Street (PO Box 385) GRIFFITH NSW 2680 Phone: (02) 6962 3944 Fax: (02) 6962 6103

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