

WORKING FOR GROWERS

Promotion: A Focus in 2014 and beyond

The Board are investing in promotion of the region in a move to increase the regions profile among consumers and lead to greater levels of consumption of the product from the Riverina. The Board has pledged \$50,000 toward a regional marketing plan that encompasses all of what the region has to offer, not just the wine industry.

The Board is for the first time sponsoring the regional community event La Festa, held in Griffith over Easter.

The focus on promotion has led to the formation of a promotions committee within the Board. Growers with suggestions and ideas are invited to contribute possible ideas for consideration by the Board.

Harvest Management Scheme

The Board has been liaising with representatives of Transport for NSW (TfNSW) taking images of the winegrape supply chain from the vineyard to the loading dock. The purpose of the images is to inform discussion and provide suitable pictorial material for the Scheme development that the Board hopes will be in place for the 2015 vintage



The image above was taken by a remotely controlled unmanned aerial vehicle.

Trunk Disease spore trap installed in Griffith

As part of a national trunk disease project, the Riverina has volunteered a site to have a spore trap installed. The frequency of trunk diseases in the Riverina has

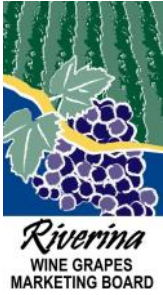
grown in recent years with the true cause not fully understood. On the 25th March the team of researchers from the National Wine Grape Industry Centre and SARDI together with the Wine Grapes Marketing Board installed a spore trap at the Hanwood DPI viticulture station. This trap is designed to collect spores carried in the air over 30 days with the range of spores present to be analysed to determine if there is a trend in the appearance of certain disease causing spores in the local atmosphere. This 3 year project will present growers with knowledge of when spores are most likely to be in the atmosphere, which will assist with farm management to avoid the time of elevated disease risk.



Spore trap in the Riverina

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BOARD ACTIVITIES REPORT



- In correspondence sent to all growers in late February the Board outlined the approach that it was taking with Murray Valley Winegrowers (MVW) and the Federal Government in relation to the industry issues of oversupply and market distortion. Since attending a series of meetings at Parliament House, Canberra and meeting with the Australian Small Business Commissioner regarding the industry issues, concerns and problems no further action has occurred. The Small Business Commissioner advised that he would investigate the behaviour of a number of wineries with a view to changing their behaviour. His office is prepared to work with growers and industry bodies in ironing out bad and poor behaviour in the industry by wineries.
- The delegation also met with Riverina MP and Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Finance Michael McCormack to advise him of the purpose of the visit and the opportunity to restructure the industry using the WET rebate.
- The Honourable Susan Ley MP for Farrer and Assistant Minister for Education was concerned that terms and conditions of payment varied across the industry. She advised that she would be prepared to highlight the concerns of growers in a speech within parliament.
- The Honourable Joel Fitzgibbon MP for Hunter and Shadow Minister for Agriculture was concerned that the Code of Conduct was not working and perhaps the Productivity Commission if setup could review it to determine if it was still working for the winegrape industry.
- The delegation also met with staff from the Wine Section of the Department of Agriculture Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF). We were advised that to seek a move from the current Voluntary Code of Conduct to a Prescribed Voluntary Code of Conduct could frighten industry participants. Therefore it is more likely that the industry will progress toward a regulation that mandates the code of conduct making it apply to all winegrape purchasers nationally. To achieve this we need the support of the Treasurer and a strong case to be developed along with a formal submission made to the Minister on behalf of the industry. DAFF then write an options risk paper.
- The WGMB wrote a joint submission with the Riverina Winemakers Association in response to the Petroleum Exploration licence applications in the region.
- After careful consideration of a range of suitable applicants for the two Board appointed Board positions, Bruno Altin and Eric Berton were both re-appointed for a 3 year term.
- AWRI has been announced as the successful applicant for significant wine industry services for the region under a new funding model which is a partnership between NSWIA and the Department of Primary Industries. The WGMB represented the interests of the Riverina area throughout this process to ensure that our region received services as part of this state wide program.
- The staff are continuing to conduct the laboratory services for growers to have an independent analysis of fruit. The office is also running a number of trials through the laboratory as part of the WGMB's GWRDC Grassroots project activities.
- Continuing to liaise with the NSW Small Business Commissioner (NSWSBC) regarding outstanding grape payments from 2013 vintage.
- The WGMB will be actively liaising with Transport for New South Wales this season to try and work out a Harvest Management Scheme for the regions winegrape industry. Harvest transport of winegrapes is an ongoing issue for the region with the regional wineries each developing their own policy of management of the problem.
- Completed the 2014/15 application for \$125,000 regional funding as part of the GWRDC regional program. The next projects will focus on a trunk disease trial site, Beneficial co-planting to minimise root rot, mid-row management options, colour development trial and identifying and managing quality zones using precision viticulture methods.

\$100 REBATE FOR CHEMICAL USER TRAINING

The WGMB is offering \$100 rebate for every levy paying grape grower that presents an invoice for training commencing 2014. For further information contact the Board staff on 02 6962 3944 or call into the office with your invoice.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE AVAILABLE FOR GROWERS

Interim Farm Household Allowance (IFHA)

The Federal Government has recently announced a revised Low Income Support Payment for farmers. This program is available now and follows on from the Climate Change Adjustment Program and the Transitional Farm Family Payment scheme.

Farmers currently experiencing low income and farmers who were granted those payments previously may be eligible for the IFHA. The Interim FHA will change to The FHA on 30th June 2014 and IFHA recipients may have to apply for FHA to keep their payments going.

Eligibility basics

- you must be a farmer
- contribute a significant part of your labour and capital to the farm enterprise based on specific criteria
- meet an income and assets test (off farm income may be able to be offset against Farm Loan interest)
- meet with a Rural Financial Counsellor (within eight weeks of being notified that your claim has been assessed)

Eligibility Criteria

- be low income farmers
- liquid assets (i.e. cash in the bank, shares, etc) must be less than \$20,000 for couples though higher amounts may be acceptable with a payment waiting period applying.
- Total net asset limit of \$2,550,000
- Off farm asset limit which has same threshold as Newstart (ie. Approximately \$250,000)
- Knowing whether you would be eligible or not is sometimes difficult to tell so it is often better to apply and see rather than self assess.

Payment

- Fortnightly payment of roughly \$850 per couple depending on the income and asset test. Health Care Card is also available.

Further Information and application forms

Information on the IFHA is available from Centrelink or from any Rural Financial Counselling Service.

Farm Finance Concessional Loans (FFCL)

The Rural Assistance Authority of NSW (RAA) has recently announced the opening of the second round of FFCL applications with a total of \$10,000,000 available. Another round is due to available from the 1st July 2014. Briefly these loans are available to restructure half of a farmers existing core debt up to the value of \$650,000 at roughly 4.5% for 5 years.

Farm Innovation Fund Loans (FIFL)

The Rural Assistance Authority of NSW (RAA) has recently announced the availability of the FIFL which replaces the old Special Conservation Loan. Funding by way of a loan is available to meet the cost of carrying out permanent capital works that will have a significant beneficial impact on the land, long term profitability of the enterprise and address adverse seasonal conditions. Eligible works include new and upgrading of irrigation systems, fodder storage facilities, fencing and road works, soil conservation and erosion control, farm sheds and planting of trees for shade and wild life corridors.

These are generally 10 year loans at roughly 4.5% interest with funds being distributed from the RAA on receipt of invoices for the works carried out.

Other free and confidential Services available from the Rural Financial Counselling service

- Analyse your cash flow, viability and gross margins
- Prepare forecasts, budgets and cashflows
- Identify areas of risk in your business
- Help with refinance proposals and annual reviews - Work professionally with your bank
- Plan for the future – including succession planning + retirement
- Help with Farm Debt Mediation

If you have any queries or questions please ring Kevin McCrum, Rural Financial Counselling Service NSW Southern Region

Phone: 02 69623 812 or 02 6953 0585

Fax: 02 6964 2409

Mobile: 0448 642 444

Email: kmccrum@rfcsnsw-sr.com.au



TURNING RESEARCH INTO BETTER PRACTICE

Vineyard care workshops

Post-harvest management and biosecurity

Where:
NSW DPI, Farm 217
Murray Road
Hanwood

When:
Friday 4 April

Time:
8:30am – 1:30pm

Cost: \$10.00
Morning tea and lunch will be provided.

Learn how to set your vineyard up for a great start to next season AND protect it in the long term.

Hear about the latest research and get useful tips about post-harvest management of vines on topics including:

- ▶ how to manage the impact of extreme weather on vine condition;
- ▶ successful strategies for vineyard irrigation and nutrient application;
- ▶ best-practice vineyard-management in preparation for next season.

Experts **Dr Michael McCarthy**, head of viticulture at the South Australian Research and Development Institute, and **Dr Jason Smith**, viticulture research scientist at the National Wine and Grape Industry Centre, will translate the latest research to allow better practice for post-harvest management of your vineyard.

The workshop will also include a presentation by **Plant Health Australia** and **Wine Grape Growers' Australia** – introducing the new *Biosecurity Manual for the Viticulture Industry* and giving you specific information on what to do if you notice an unusual pest or disease in your vineyard.

Book online:
www.trybooking.com/ELVW
Enquiries: 08 8273 0500



www.gwrdc.com.au

Making the most of your smartphone and tablet: *Work smarter not harder in the vineyard*



Friday 4th April 1:30-3:30pm (following GWRDC workshop)
NSW DPI Farm 217 Murray Road Hanwood

If you are up to your eyeballs in 'ieverything' but don't feel you are maximising the technology or you are yet to dip your toe into the world of apps, social media, downloads and Mbs, then this is the workshop for you.

In this afternoon session, we will cover the following:

- What to consider before purchasing*
- Internet access, data plans and coverage*
- Accessories*
- Working remotely; taking your office with you wherever you are*
- Mobile security*
- Cloud computing*
- Apps which could be useful for you and your business*
- Social media*
- What's in the pipeline...or in the cloud?*

This session will be interactive, so bring along your smart phone or tablet if you have one!

To register your attendance at this event please contact Kristy Bartrop
Wine Grapes Marketing Board, phone: 0422 717 573, email: kbartrop@wgmb.net.au

RIVERINA FIELD DAYS

The Wine Grapes Marketing Board is the major sponsor of the 2014 Riverina Field Days. This event is the premier farm field day in the region offering a wide range of exhibitors and something of interest for the entire family.

The field days will be held 9th and 10th May at the Griffith Showgrounds with free on-site parking available via the Walla Avenue entrance.

The Board will be sending all levy paying grape growers two complimentary tickets to come along and experience the event. These will be posted to growers early April.

Please ensure you visit our tent at site 40 in the centre of the main arena where we can provide you with an the latest update of the Board activities and welcome suggestions for future work.





Riverina
WINE GRAPES
MARKETING BOARD



Trunk disease Workshop:

What are the practical options for a vine with trunk disease?

Gain a greater awareness of how to prevent, detect and manage trunk diseases in young and old vines. Effective management strategies minimise the impact of trunk disease on vineyard productivity.

The two leading Australian experts on trunk disease management, Mark Sosnowski (PIRSA - SARDI) and Sandra Savocchia (NWGIC) will present an interactive workshop where participants will experience the latest solutions to this wide spread problem.

This workshop will provide:

- ✓ Background information to assist with identification of trunk disease symptoms.
- ✓ The latest recommendations on prevention and management of trunk disease in the vineyard.

NSW DPI Research Station, Murray Road Griffith

29th April 2014

7:30am—12noon

Breakfast and morning tea supplied. Please indicate any special dietary requirements.

RSVP: Thursday 24th April to Kristy Bartrop (kbartrop@wgmb.net.au or 0422 717 573)

REFLECTIVE MATTING TO IMPROVE COLOUR

As part of the GWRDC regional program in the Riverina, a trial has been established to monitor the benefits of reflective matting on the colour development of wine grapes. The two largest wineries in the Riverina, Casella Wines and De Bortoli Wines, determine the value of red grapes based on their colour reading. This has driven growers to try alternative methods to manipulate the colour formation in an effort to improve their vineyard return. The use of reflective matting is common for the advancement of colour in fruit tree crops yet it had not been tried in the region to see if there was a benefit to having the matting in winegrapes. In theory, the matting would reflect the light under the canopy to improve colour development whilst also having the benefit of potentially cooling the soil which can also improve the bunch colour formation. One major concern was that the reflection would be too intense and could cause sunburn.

The trial was established across three common red varieties in 2013, namely Shiraz, Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon. The trial consists of a full mid-row strip of



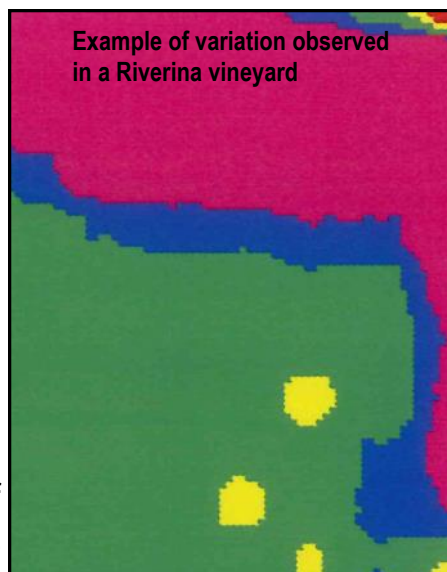
matting, under vine only strips and a control. The first year data has demonstrated that the shiraz vine is most responsive to the matting with an improved colour response measured. The other varieties had limited response which could be as a result of the dense canopy shading the bunch zone in these blocks. Soil temperature monitoring identified that the temperature fluctuations under the matting were less extreme than the control segment. There were also no signs of additional sunburn effects even though the region experienced multiple heatwaves throughout the trial.

In 2014 the trial will be expanded in the Shiraz block to facilitate a greater capacity to sample and monitor the bunch response. The thin strip option will not be continued as it was initially thought to be a budget option, though it is twice the work to install which negates the benefit of cost saving. The full mid-row option is easier to install and could be mechanised for a commercial enterprise. The matting is durable for all vehicle passes and will remain in the vineyard to observe the life of the product.

PILOT YEAR PRECISION VITICULTURE PROJECT

The quality of wine grapes can be determined by a analysis of satellite imagery. This theory has been proven many times through various organisations though the growers of the Riverina have yet to fully embrace the opportunity. This is due to a number of reasons, but typically the cost has been inhibitory in this extended period of low returns for wine grapes. This time period where many growers are unable to fund their own farm analysis has been taken as an opportunity for the GWRDC regional program to test the method in the local production area.

The project for 2013/14 involved the collection of satellite imagery of Shiraz blocks and the subsequent apportionment of blocks into graded areas which correlate with the measured vigour. These sections of blocks were then sampled and analysed to



understand the variability in colour and grape ripeness in each measured segment. Understanding the variation in a vineyard can assist in many ways which could improve vineyard returns. The maps provide a guide to better sample the vineyard, alter irrigation management for sections or in some cases could result in a split in blocks to treat one section as a premium and the other commercial grade.

This project was conducted over 12 vineyards blocks in 2013/14 partly due to this being the pilot year, but also due to limitations of blocks that were not frost affected. In the 2014/15 the number of sites will be increased. The only limitation for the most accurate maps is that the calibration is only for Shiraz at this stage. If you would like to be included in the next year of this project, please contact the Board staff.

WINE GRAPES MARKETING BOARD

RIVERINA GRAPE INTAKE 2014 AS AT 14TH MARCH 2014

	Final 2013 intake	2014 Estimated intake	Intake as at 14 Mar 14	Est. Outstanding as at 14 Mar
WHITE VARIETIES				
Chardonnay	54,381	47,117	51,647	155
Chenin Blanc	634	546	435	0
Colombard	10,599	10,180	8,337	77
Muscat Blanc (Frontignac)	10,177	9,409	10,015	175
Muscat Gordo Blanco	5,094	4,215	3,894	825
Pinot Gris	14,473	12,844	15,718	135
Riesling	3,662	3,343	2,746	48
Sauvignon Blanc	11,777	10,240	13,538	0
Semillon	34,621	27,402	29,752	75
Traminer	6,168	4,858	6,261	0
Verdelho	4,366	4,612	3,128	0
Viognier	4,065	2,421	2,108	50
Other White	3,129	6,875	5,243	710
TOTAL WHITE	163,147	144,060	152,821	2,250
RED				
Cabernet Sauvignon	21,717	19,699	8,482	9,332
Durif	4,448	3,896	3,772	102
Merlot	20,922	17,403	15,751	1,359
Muscat Brown (Red Front)	605	687	630	40
Petit Verdot	2,487	2,246	1,336	287
Pinot Noir	3,306	3,035	3,368	0
Ruby Cabernet	7,402	7,331	2,796	3,837
Sangiovese	445	297	180	120
Shiraz	70,773	62,646	54,398	1,576
Tempranillo	753	677	531	18
Other RED	3,575	2,906	1,947	530
TOTAL RED	136,432	120,823	93,192	17,201
TOTAL GRAPES	299,579	264,883	246,014	19,451

Notes: This report has been compiled by Stuart McGrath-Kerr for and on behalf of the Riverina Winemakers Association. It is estimated that there has been some underreporting of tonnages, at around 3,000 tonnes. This suggests a final intake of around 270,000 tonnes which is 10% lower than the 2013 harvest tonnes.

White grape intake was 10,000 tonnes higher than expected where red grape intake was 10,000 lower.

WINE GRAPES MARKETING BOARD - proudly serving winegrape producers since 1933
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