

GROWERS ADVISED TO MONITOR PAYMENTS CLOSELY

Reports are being received by the Board that growers at some regional wineries did not receive their first payment on the date they believed it was due. Such action by any winery is disappointing as it is also reported that the growers have not been informed of the delay but needed to contact the winery after noting that the funds were not in their bank account.

The Board has made contact with the Office of the Small Business Commissioner to advise them of the winery delay but has also been informed that the Commissioner currently lacks any legislative power to act against such practices other than undertake mediation.

Obviously concerned growers have the legal right to take the matter further but, as growers are aware this approach carries a certain level of risk.

The Board has been notified that the NSW Shadow Minister for Small Business is shortly to introduce a non-government draft Bill into parliament that aims specifically at providing some powers to the Commissioner which will be welcomed. If continued delays on payments occur the Commissioner may look to develop an industry standard or code within the State. This would be significant as the region currently has no statutory provisions that set and enforce payment provisions for winegrapes.

The Office of the Smaller Business Commissioner can be contacted on the following:

Ph: 1300 795 534

Email: we.assist@smallbusiness.nsw.gov.au

STATUTORY FEES FOR 2012

All growers that are constituents of the Wine Grapes Marketing Board are liable to pay the statutory fees and charges of the Board each year. The amount agreed by growers at the Budget and Strategic Planning meeting held in 2011 is \$3.90 per tonne of fresh weight fruit.

At the start of this year the Board wrote to all known wineries seeking their support and assistance to deduct these fees and charges from growers via an Agency Agreement. The process was supported by the Riverina Winemakers Association and the majority of wineries have agreed to this process on the proviso that they collect a 5% fee to undertake this (approximately \$0.20 per tonne).

At time of writing the Board is aware that DeBortoli Wines and D.S. Graham (aka Ralph Graham) have decided not to deduct these and the Board therefore has to invoice growers for statutory fees and charges.

All DeBortoli Wines growers should have received an invoice and a report on the tonnes that they have delivered to DeBortoli Wines in 2012. If there are any errors in the report you are requested to contact the Board to discuss. Growers that delivered to D.S. Graham will shortly receive their invoices.

All invoices are payable on or before 30 June 2012. This is also the date on which wineries that signed Agency Agreements will remit funds to the Board.

To confirm that wineries have remitted these correctly the Board has sought the appointment of Authorised Officers under the *Agricultural Industry Services Act 1998*. These Officers are representatives of regional accountancy firms and will be able to audit both wineries' and growers' records should it be required.

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WHAT DOES THE BOARD DO FOR GROWERS

The Board and its staff are often asked “what do you do for growers”, “why should I pay the levy”. The Board has produced the following list of activities and actions that it does to assist growers on an annual basis.

- Point of Contact
- Legal Assistance
- Mediation Services
- Contract Advice
- Information Provider
- Grower Representation
- Disaster Assessments
- Winery Liaison
- Grower Meetings
- Industry Statistics
- Data Collection
- Media Releases
- Farm Mapping
- Research, Development and Extension
- Laboratory Analysis of grapes
- Weather Station Reporting
- Viticultural Advice/Assistance
- Grape pricing information
- Regional promotion
- Government Liaison/Representation
- Regulatory reporting and advice
- Irrigation conversion management (furrow to drip)
- HACCP Food Safety Program
- Local Field Days
- Grape Sale Index
- Spray Diary development
- Industry Fact Sheets
- Grant application assistance
- Project management
- Regional presentations
- Communication/correspondence
- Regional wine displays
- General Assistance
- Grower Industry Workshops
- Local Field Trials
- Regional Newsletter “Vine Chat”
- Data Analysis
- Industry Sponsorship
- National/State Representation
- Grower liaison
- Disease assessments
- General Advocacy

BOARD ACTIVITIES REPORT

The Board meets each month to discuss issues within the industry and to direct staff activities. The following report relates to the notable items from the past two meetings of the Board.

- The Board is investigating the use of collective bargaining for the region as recommended by the NSW Government.
- The region’s high rainfall and flooding took up a great deal of Board member and staff time with media and engaging governments to commence disaster relief for the region.
- Investigation into an Ad-valorem levy system was conducted for presentation to growers at the forthcoming Annual General Meeting.
- Liaison with the region’s wineries regarding the payment of statutory fees and charges for 2012.
- Continued to raise in the media the pricing fairness of winegrapes across similar inland regions.
- Setup and managed the Board marquee at the 2012 Board sponsored Riverina Field Day.
- Provided input into the Murrumbidgee Catchment Management Plan relating to Landscape values and changes in the region.
- Reviewed the 22 Board policies and procedures and updated these on the Board’s website.
- Completed and approved the 2011 Annual Report for distribution to the Minister and growers.
- Agreed to sponsor an award for Best made Wine from Riverina winegrapes at the Riverina Wine Show 2012.
- Supported the Yenda Grape Growers Association call for an Inquiry into the flooding of the Yenda Village and surrounding district.
- Developed a submission to the MDBA and part funded a socio-economic study in the impact of the Plan on the regions producers.
- Participated in the development of the 2012-13 season AWRI agrochemical “Dog Book”
- Sponsored a double page editorial article promoting the regions growers and the Riverina wine region in the Leeton and Griffith Visitor Centre Guides.
- Attended the Yenda and Hanwood Association Meetings.
- Continued to respond to many enquiries relating to flood relief availability.

STATE BASED CAMPAIGN CAN ALSO WORK LOCALLY “ASK FOR IT”

Some of you may already be aware of a marketing program initiated by the New South Wales Wine Industry Association (NSWWIA) called “Ask For It”.

The “Ask For It” campaign has been developed as a call to action for wine consumers to help increase the sales of NSW wine in our own market, i.e. New South Wales. The campaign was trialled at the Sydney Cellar Door, and received an overwhelming amount of support from not only the industry, but more importantly the consumers and trade.



The concept can be applied at a State, Regional or Individual business level and regional wineries are starting to get on board.

At the Royal Easter Show the NSW wine area was heavily branded with the “Ask For It” material and all stalls will be promoting the bookmarks and bottle tags.

Thus far all of the campaign work has been achieved with minimal financial expenditure by industry with those participants in the program covering the printing

costs of posters and other material. There has also been an extraordinary amount of voluntary input.

In the future there will be opportunities to develop a range of marketing activities to utilise the potential of the concept, and NSWWIA members will be given the opportunity to participate in these. In the meantime wineries have been asked to be as active as possible in promoting this through your own marketing activities and particularly social media. Use the hash tag #askforit in all relating tweets.

Why is this relevant to Riverina Growers? NSW and Sydney particularly is the biggest wine market in Australia but NSW wine lacks market share - this program looks to address this. **How can local growers support it?** Simply “Ask For It” locally. When you are shopping for wine at the local discount liquor or major retailer “Ask For It”. If the wine that is made from your grapes is not present “Ask For It”. Eventually they will get the message and stock it and others can enjoy NSW and Riverina Wines.

GWRDC - WAC MERGER PROPOSAL - CONSULTATION

A proposal to initiate a rationalisation and consolidation of the industry support structure by merging the Grape and Wine Research and Development Corporation (GWRDC) and Wine Australia Corporation (WAC) to create a single statutory authority has begun.

The proposal has been developed jointly by the industry’s representative bodies, Winemakers’ Federation of Australia (WFA) and Wine Grape Growers Australia (WGGA), and is the next step in building a closer working relationship between the four national organisations following their recent co-location in Adelaide. WFA and WGGA will remain separate organisations.

The primary benefit of the proposed merger is achieving co-ordination by one organisation, against one set of strategies, of the major sum of monies invested by winemakers and growers in the future of the wine sector. Over the past three years GWRDC has invested \$22-25 million annually in Research, Development & Extension, while WAC currently invests just over \$5 million annually in its core activities. This represents 90% of industry investment in the national organisations.

The Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, Senator the Hon Joe Ludwig, has approved this initiative being taken forward for industry consultation. WFA and WGGA have made a commitment to present a formal case by 31 July 2012, incorporating an overview of all comments received during the consultation phase.

The Government will then consider the submission and make a decision. If the Government agrees to the merger, legislation to replace the two bodies with a new body will need to be drafted and then considered by the Parliament.

The Board is supporting the merger on the proviso that growers contributions to Research and Development \$2 per tonne is principally used for R&D in viticulture.

All growers are being invited to attend a consultation meeting to occur in Griffith at the Riverina TAFE, Wine and Food Technology Centre, Neville Place. This will commence at 9am until 10am on Thursday 7th June 2012.

This consultation meeting will also be attended by winery representatives from the region.

WINE INDUSTRY FUTURE LEADERS PROGRAM 2012

The wine sector has chosen 15 participants for the fifth intake of its successful national development program *Future Leaders – Succession for the Australian Wine Sector*.

Kristy Bartrop (pictured), Industry Development Officer at the Riverina Wine Grapes Marketing Board has been selected to participate in the 2012 Future Leaders program.

'It is an honour to have been selected and I plan to make the most of this opportunity to represent the interests of the Riverina wine industry and to develop my leadership skills' said Mrs Bartrop.

'The program will involve sessions in Canberra, Adelaide and regional wine producing areas commencing in April'

Future Leaders is a joint initiative of WFA, Wine Grape Growers Australia, Wine Australia and the Grape and Wine Research and development Corporation.

As in previous years, the selected participants represent a broad cross-section of the industry, from winemakers and viticulturists to professionals involved with marketing, sales, public relations and industry development.

More than 50 applications were received from across Australia for the program, which will be delivered for the third time by the Australian Rural Leadership Foundation (ARLF).

"The quality and diversity of the applicants remains very

high and that has been a key part of the program's success," said Stephen Strachan, Chief Executive of the Winemakers' Federation of Australia (WFA).



Kristy Bartrop - Industry Development Officer

"These are young or mid-career leaders who we are hoping will get involved with important issues for the sector at a national, state and regional level. "We want them not just to learn, but also to engage, contribute and debate, and to develop the range of skills that underpin strong leadership."

A number of graduates from the first four programs have taken on formal roles, ranging from serving on boards and committees through to providing leadership and new ideas at a regional level.

BASIN PLAN CONCERNS BY NATIONAL IRRIGATORS COUNCIL

Chairman of the NIC, Gavin McMahon, said the proposed Basin Plan will cost thousands of jobs, put increased pressure on food prices, and threaten family farms and regional communities.



National
Irrigators'
Council

"If the proposed Basin Plan is adopted in its current form the Minister will be responsible for: Economically and socially destroying communities reliant on water for

their survival; Failing to deliver on a promise of a balanced plan which takes into consideration equally social, environmental and economic outcomes; Offering no solutions to problems of invasive fish species, riparian vegetation, urban pollution, cold-water pollution etc; Ignoring the people who live in the Basin, and making a mockery of the idea of 'localism'; Causing flooding events which will have the potential to damage infrastructure.

MIA VINE IMPROVEMENT SOCIETY'S 2012 CUTTING SEASON

The MIA Vine Improvement Society (MIAVIS) is a not-for-profit organisation based in Yenda NSW, and is seeking to supply grape growers and nurseries with grapevine, prune/plum and cherry propagation material. Their material is sourced from accredited local

plantings, which have undergone inspections on various levels, including a virus testing program.

If you are interested in MIAVIS stock lists, pricing information and order forms, contact Chairman Leo DePaoli on 0429 318 397 or miavis@bigpond.com.

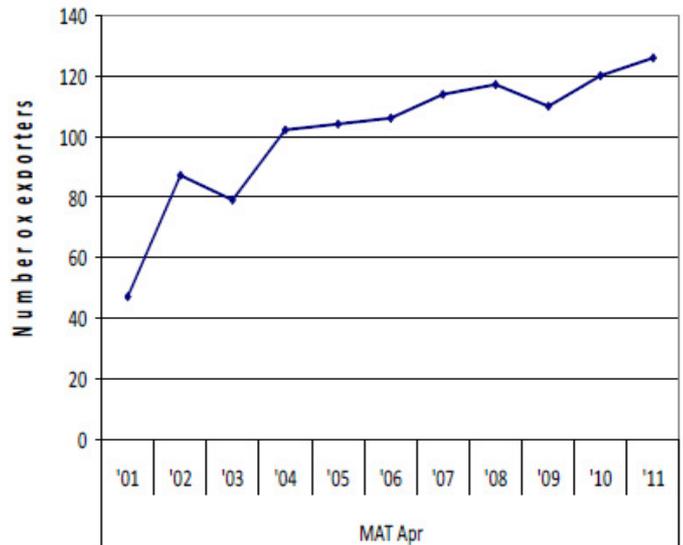
RIVERINA BOTTLED WINE EXPORTS 2001 - 2011

The following graph has been extracted from a 59 page report by Wine Australia for New South Wales Wine producers. Growers wishing to obtain a full copy of the Report for the year ended April 2012 that was compiled should contact the office.

Total exports



Number of exporters



RIVERINA FIELD DAYS 2012

The Riverina Wine Grapes Marketing Board was the major sponsor for the Riverina Field Days held on Friday 11th and Saturday 12th May 2012. This event provides the Riverina with an excellent opportunity to experience the range of products and services available to the agricultural sector, as well as a range of general stores providing interest for the whole family. The event was well attended by the community, with many grape growers using their WGMB grower passes to enter the field days. The inventors competition was won by Riverina Water Engineering with their "Diesel Dog" which reduces the amount of fuel required to operate a drip irrigation system and also allows remote operation. If you are interested in exhibiting or have ideas for next year's event, please contact the Board office.



James Codemo, Bruno Brombal and Sheree Collins at the 2012 RFD

AWRI DOG BOOK CHANGES FOR 2012-13 SEASON

The new AWRI dogbook will be supplied to all growers in July in our Spray Diary Publication. In the development of the new “dogbook” the AWRI have reported the following changes that are important for growers to note as they prepare for the coming season.

There are two new chemicals being registered for Powdery Mildew management

Proquinazid (Talendo)

Cyflufenamid (Flute 50EW)

There are five actives that are being removed from the book

Fusilazole (Nustar DF for Powdery mildew) – Removed as no longer registered

Parathion-Methyl (Parashoot CS and Pennacap-M – Insecticide) – being phased out, one more year in book.

Dimethoate (Danadim, Dimethoate, Dimethoate 400, Rogor, Rover, Saboteur – Insecticide) – Permit only

Fenthion (Lebaycid – Insecticide) – Under Permit only

Diuron (Diurex WG, Diuron 500, Diuron 900DF, Diuron 900 WDG, Diuron 900 WG, Diuron flowable, Striker 500SC, Zee-Uron 900WG– Herbicide) – Under permit only

There are some resistance issues with some chemicals

Ridomil – Observed Downy Mildew resistance in parts of NSW & Vic. There is a gradual decline in performance noted by those with the issue. Increasing the dose tends to increase performance, though this is obviously not a long term option.

Strobilurin (Cabrio, Flint, Amistar, Mirador, Supernova) – Observed Powdery Mildew resistance experienced in WA/VIC/SA – sudden failure to perform, which extends across all the Strobilurin based products. Tank mixing and limiting to 2 sprays per season will reduce risk.

It was reported to the committee that they have found that downy spores can live in soils for up to 17 years, so once the resistance is developed in a vineyard, it could be considered to be a permanent concern for that property. As the season approaches, there are often more changes made to the book and these will be reported to growers once they are confirmed.

NEW MENTAL HEALTH TELEPHONE SERVICE ANNOUNCED

Every resident of the Murrumbidgee Electorate will have direct telephone access to expert mental health advice for the first time following the launch of a 24 hour telephone support service, Member for Murrumbidgee Adrian Piccoli said.

Mr Piccoli welcomed the NSW Government’s new **1800 011 511 Mental Health Line**, which will ensure that people with a mental health problem, their families and carers can access the care they need whenever and wherever they need it.

“The *Mental Health Line* is a groundbreaking service that will, for the very first time, provide people in the Murrumbidgee Electorate with easy access to expert mental health advice through a single telephone number,” Mr Piccoli said.

“From today, people in the Murrumbidgee Electorate will no longer have to search through complicated directories to get help for a mental health problem.

“This service really does mark a new era of mental

health care in NSW; having access to this line will mean that there will be somebody available 24/7 to help.

“By dialling just one number people can speak to a mental health professional and be directed to the most appropriate care in their local area.

“Anyone with a mental health issue in the Murrumbidgee Electorate can use the *Mental Health Line* to link with a mental health professional and be directed to the most appropriate care.

“The *Mental Health Line* will operate round the clock and will provide a telephone triage assessment and referral service staffed by mental health clinicians.

“However, it’s important to remember the *Mental Health Line* is not an emergency service. People in a life-threatening situation must still call 000 to receive immediate help.”

Mr Piccoli said the *Mental Health Line* highlights the NSW Government’s commitment to improving mental health outcomes for the people of NSW.

WINEMAKERS OUTLINE POSITION ON FASD

The Winemakers’ Federation of Australia recently appeared before the Federal Government’s *Inquiry into Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD)* and reiterated its support for evidence-based initiatives designed to address FASD and other alcohol-related health and social issues.

The Federation’s General Manager Policy & Government Affairs, Andrew Wilsmore, stated that the wine industry: shared community concern over the impact of FASD and fully supported the recommendation that for women who are pregnant, planning a pregnancy or breastfeeding the safest option is not to drink alcohol.

WFA encourages winemakers to include the internationally-recognised “pregnant lady” pictogram on wine labels and is talking with the Government about expanding its voluntary activities.

Mr Wilsmore told the inquiry evidence clearly showed that warning or information labels were of little value if not supported by education campaigns and broader strategies to address attitudes towards alcohol.

It was hoped the current inquiry – the third to which WFA had made a submission in relation to similar

issues in just over a year – would “provide much needed impetus in these areas”.

“We support your committee bringing to higher attention the call from on-the-ground practitioners to concentrate efforts into secondary and tertiary prevention strategies,” he said.

WFA’s submission notes that research by a range of authorities, including the WHO Expert Committee on Problems with Alcohol Consumption, has shown that while warning labels may increase awareness they do not, in isolation, change behaviour.

“That has always been our argument and the focus of our discussions with government over a number of years,” Mr Wilsmore said outside the inquiry. “It is disgraceful that the Foundation for Alcohol Education & Research yesterday selectively quoted from our 21-page submission to try to support its claim that we are minimising the issue of FASD, don’t care about pregnant women and don’t want them to know the facts. That is exactly what we and industry colleagues do want. Let’s use some of the millions of dollars of public money that are provided to health organisations to fund proper education campaigns that provide the facts in the most accessible way.”

MURRUMBIDGEE VALLEY ON-FARM IRRIGATION EFFICIENCY PROGRAM

On Farm Irrigation Efficiency Program – Round 3

The Federal Government recently announced a \$100m On Farm Irrigation Efficiency Program as part of its broader \$12.9b *Water for the Future* initiative. This on farm program will provide irrigation licence holders the opportunity to transfer water entitlements to the Federal Government and receive funding to invest in farm works that will improve water use efficiency. The program will involve irrigators nominating a project, the likely level of water savings created and the cost of the investment to be made.

The Department of Sustainability Environment Water Population and Communities (DSEWPaC) has called for applications from organisations to implement the program on the Government’s behalf within each region of the southern Murray Darling Basin.

Ricegrowers’ Association of Australia (RGA), together with other industry and irrigation organisations will prepare a bid to implement the DSEWPaC program within the Murrumbidgee Valley. This bid must be submitted to DSEWPaC by 26 June 2012.

In order to prepare this funding bid to implement the on

farm irrigation efficiency program, we need to have an appreciation of the likely number of farm projects that will be submitted for funding support. The program will run for three years, however it is anticipated that the bulk of the funding would be committed to projects in the first two years.

Growers interested should contact the Board for the information sheet to be filled out. Your response is not binding, rather it provides RGA with an appreciation of the number of projects and size of projects that may be submitted. This information will guide how many staff and other resources will need to be funded to implement this program. These must be completed and faxed to the RGA by no later than **18 June 2012**.

We expect that a formal call for farm projects will be made around September or October 2012, following the appointment of the implementing group, called a Delivery Partner. You will be contacted at that time and invited to submit a detailed project for funding.

If you require further information or explanation, please contact the Board on (02) 6962 3944

NEWS IN BRIEF

ABC Rural - On-line 24th May 2012

by Deb O'Callaghan

Wine grape growers are being hit by demands to repay amounts they were paid by a winery at Mildura, in north-west Victoria, before its financial collapse three years ago.

Neqtar Wines went into administration in 2009 owing growers an estimated \$4 million, but the administrators are now saying some growers were given preferential payments that need to be paid back.

The Murray Valley Winegrowers' chairman Dennis Mills says some individuals are being asked to repay amounts up to \$200,000.

"With the ongoing very low prices that people have been receiving and making great losses, for someone to have to come up with that sort of money would be near to nigh impossible and it probably could be the nail in the coffin, so to speak."

New Legislation for Securing Rights over Fruit

www.winebiz.com.au, L Stanford WGGA

New legislation called the *Personal Property Security Act (PPSA)* will improve growers rights to reclaim their fruit, or the value of it, from financially stressed purchasers who cannot pay their debts.

The legislation has recently come into effect and all growers when discussing contracts renewals should ensure that they have this coverage in their contract.

To ensure that it is legitimate the contract will need to be compliant with the PPSA legislation in that it will

require a Retention of Title Clause (ROT). The buyer of the fruit also needs to agree to the contract being jointly registered on the Personal Property Security Register (PPSR). Registration on the PPSR will involve a small charge. Registration can be done by an agent or it can be done by the grower on a government controlled website.

Retention of Title (ROT) clauses specifies when ownership passes from the seller (grower) to the buyer and the wine industry's Code of Conduct states that an "... agreement must state when title in the winegrapes passes from the winegrape grower to the winegrape purchaser".

The specified point of hand-over in title is usually when full payment has been made. That is, until the fruit is paid for, it remains the property of the grower. If the buyer becomes insolvent and is therefore unable to pay for the grapes they should be returned to the grower. While understandably this is a difficult position identifying grapes once they are converted into wine and blended etc, the ROT clause gives the seller some recourse to reclaim the value of their grapes from the sale of the resultant wine.

If a purchaser becomes insolvent the value of the assets goes to the secured creditors and unsecured creditors will be paid only if there is any residual funds available.

The new legislation makes the provision for growers to become secured creditors and would allow them to draw on the value of the business rather than recoup grape/wine.

IMPORTANT DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Grower/Winery Consultation of GWRDC & Wine Australia Merger

Date: Thursday 7th June 2012 9-10am

Venue: Riverina TAFE Food and Wine Tech Centre

2012 Post Vintage Seminar

Date: Wednesday 13th June 2012 12pm

Venue: Gemini Hotel Function Centre

Wine Grapes Marketing Board - Annual General Meeting

Date: Tuesday 19th June 2012 8pm

Venue: Yoogali Catholic Club, Yoogali NSW 2680

WINE GRAPES MARKETING BOARD - proudly serving winegrape producers since 1933

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