

Central Coast Vineyard Team's Strategy

Five Year Strategy (2008- 2012)

Broad Description

The Central Coast Vineyard Team has a long and rich history of outreaching to vineyard owners, operators, and employees since 1995. Through the use of the Positive Points System™, a comprehensive self-assessment program addressing pesticide risk and whole-farm management, CCVT has collected over 800 evaluations since 1996. Data shows that growers are adopting new practices and interaction with the growers indicates a broad change in the culture and approach to farming. Growers today are increasingly aware of the impacts of the farming decisions and practices both within and beyond the farm boundaries.

CCVT's extensive outreach and demonstration program includes several components:

- Quarterly “tailgate” meetings (in three counties) which use a grower-to-grower approach, and are conducted in Spanish (where appropriate)
- Quarterly newsletters distributed to 2,500 recipients throughout the state
- Publication of articles in various trade publications
- Extensive electronic library on www.vineyardteam.org
- Annual Sustainable Ag Expo™ which targets PCA's, managers, agency, farmers, and academic stakeholders of various farm crops
- Regular presentations in academic and trade meetings throughout the state
- Regular on-farm demonstration of reduced risk practices

This phase of CCVT's organizational development marks an important transition with the growth and development of several new initiatives:

- Over three years and with extensive technical support and external peer-review, CCVT finalized its draft standards for “certified sustainably grown”. This document modifies the original PPS by expanding the chapters and content, and by modifying the language and documentation so that the results can be independently verified. With regards to pesticides, the standards have a “Do Not Use” pesticide list that prohibits use of materials specified by the California Department of Pesticide Regulation's various lists ((known to cause reproductive toxicity, known to cause cancer, cholinesterase inhibiting, toxic air contaminant, dpr groundwater protection, dpr restricted material).
- This year, CCVT is launching its Pilot Certification program, where CCVT is anticipating that 10 growers will be certified (as verified by an independent auditor). This claim will be placed on a final product and supporting materials and will be in the market in 2009. At the same time, CCVT is pursuing an ambitious outreach strategy to retailers, wholesalers, distributors, and restaurants to identify opportunities for product placement and consumer-friendly educational materials.

- CCVT recently completed its second annual Earth Day Food and Wine Festival which is a community consumer event that features sustainably produced foods and wines. This is an important event to directly connect and educate consumers with food and wine products grown in an environmentally responsible way.

With the certification program and expanded consumer outreach, CCVT is bridging an important gap in setting a standard for sustainability and making that link to the consumer. CCVT believes that one of the underdeveloped opportunities in IPM and pesticide risk reduction is the role of marketplace incentives.

Five Year Goals, Tactics and Measures

Goal 1: Increase the use of IPM and reduced risk farming practices used in Central Coast Vineyards.

Tactic: Educate operators through field demonstrations and tailgate meetings.

Measure: 50% of meeting attendee surveys collected indicates that they will change a practice as a result of the meeting within a year.

Tactic: Educate operators through the Sustainable Ag Expo.

Measure: 50% of meeting attendee surveys collected indicates that they will change a practice as a result of the meeting within a year.

Tactic: Educate and guide growers towards reduced risk practices through the implementation of the Certified Sustainably Grown assessment standards.

Measure: 200 growers complete the standards as an assessment by 2012.

Measure: 75 growers meet the minimum point requirements for certification by 2012.

Measure: 40 growers receive “certification” through an independent third-party audit.

Measure: Reduce the acres treated of those doing self-assessment with high risk materials (known to cause reproductive toxicity, known to cause cancer, cholinesterase inhibiting, toxic air contaminant, DPR groundwater protection, DPR restricted material).

Goal 2: Develop a market for wines made with certified sustainably grown fruit

Tactic: Identify potential program partners with wholesalers, retailers, restaurants representing potential program partners.

Measure: Identify contact information and affiliation for 100 individuals and companies by 2010.

Tactic: Educate potential partners on campaign opportunities.

Measure: 10 distinct sales and distribution plans in place by 2010. Tactic: Conduct consumer outreach program through print, electronic, and trade appearances and publications.

Measure: Collect contact information for 1,000 interested consumers by 2012.

Potential Partnerships with EPA

CCVT's programs are in direct alignment with PESP/EPA goals by encouraging farming practices that eliminate or reduce the use of high-risk pesticides through the adoption of integrated farming practices. In addition, financial sustainability of the organization is of key importance to CCVT so that we can continue our outreach, education, and demonstration programs. We've successfully grown our non-grant revenues since 2000 through industry support (memberships) and events (Earth Day and Expo), but there continues to be opportunities with the certification program. Ideally, we would like to be able to fund 3-4 positions without the need for grants so we can continue to meet the industry demand for our innovative programs and services.

The EPA can play an important role in this strategic direction in several ways:

- Support the Sustainable Ag Expo through sponsorships, outreach, and electronic/trade promotion and advertising.
- Support the Earth Day Food and Wine festival through sponsorships, outreach, and electronic/trade promotion and advertising.
- Provide opportunities for CCVT to present at various meetings and conferences.
- Support the certification program through electronic and print materials.
- Support the certification program through funding this critical transition phase from grower outreach to trade and consumer outreach.
- Support the improvement of the customized pesticide use database.

We are very excited about this phase of our programs and look forward to working with EPA/PESP in the future.