

Lake County Winegrape Commission's 2006 Strategy

Strategic Approach

The LCWC has three main components to its strategic approach to reduce pesticide risk. First, we are using the 'Code of Sustainable Winegrowing Workbook' as an outreach tool to all county growers. This workbook provides a framework to understand the components of sustainable winegrowing, a tool for growers to assess the sustainability of their operations, and a method for assessing progress in achieving increased sustainability. Second, we organize and sponsor frequent seminars and workshops on sustainable winegrowing topics, including topics such as IPM, reduced risk pesticides, and alternative farming approaches. Third, we support efforts to increase locally specific information on pest pressures and management so that growers can make informed decisions for pesticide risk reduction.

Progress on 2005 Activity 1

Hold grower self-assessment workshops using the 'Code of Sustainable Winegrowing Workbook'. Our goal is to hold six of these meetings in 2005.

During the last year, the LCWC held four workbook self-assessment workshops, and a fifth was cancelled due to lack of sign-ups.

Progress on 2005 Activity 2

Organize and sponsor meetings, seminars and workshops for growers on topics in sustainable winegrowing. Our goal is to provide 10 monthly meetings (November through August). Two of these meetings will be entirely on pest management. Other meetings may contain components on pest management.

The LCWC organized 10 monthly meetings in the past year. Four of the meetings were co-sponsored by the University of California Cooperative Extension, three by the California Sustainable Winegrowing Alliance, and one by Mendocino College. Three of the meetings were entirely on pest management, workshops on Vine Mealybug in English and Spanish, co-sponsoring the Mendocino College Pest Management Day, and a workshop on pest management after a wet spring, and three included pest management topics, use of beneficial mites, an ecological approach to pest management, and powdery mildew management.

Progress on 2005 Activity 3

Help to pay for weather forecasting service and host information from a county-wide network of weather stations on LCWC website. Local weather conditions vary substantially in Lake County because it is a mountainous area. Lake County is fortunate to have a multi-sponsor, multi-purpose weather network with weather stations in most of the agricultural areas of the county. The LCWC currently supports year round weather forecasts and hosts the weather information on our website to provide growers with easy access to local weather information.

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Progress on 2005 Activity 4

Develop locally specific information on sustainable pest and disease management. The LCWC will pursue grant funding to improve pest and related viticulture information management to improve winegrowing. The LCWC wants to provide growers with tools to track pest incidence, pest control measures, weather information and viticultural practices that influence pest management. This program is likely to assist growers with acquiring the information management tools and to provide training for collection of pest and viticulture information and use of the information management tools (data sheets or a database).

The LCWC organized a forum to discuss research priorities for Lake County winegrape growers, and identified several priorities in pest management. The highest priority was to better understand the biology and control of spider mites in hillside vineyards. An agreement was reached with University of California Cooperative Extension Viticulture Advisor Glenn McGourty for the LCWC and UCCE to jointly fund and carry out a pilot project to track mite pest and beneficial numbers throughout the season and to investigate the effectiveness of releasing predatory mites in two vineyard locations.

The LCWC contacted Dr. Kendra Baumgartner of the USDA for assistance with another leading pest for Lake County winegrape growers, *Armillaria mellea*, or oak root fungus. Dr. Baumgartner has submitted two grants to carry out trials in a Lake County vineyard to investigate the effectiveness of root collar excavation, application of a compost fermentation product, Vesta, and nutrient management to control *Armillaria*.

Progress on 2005 Activity 5

Progress on Measuring Risk Reduction

Two approaches to measuring risk reduction were listed in the LCWC 2005 Strategy for Pesticide Risk Reduction. One was to compare self assessment scores for growers who completed vineyard self assessments several years earlier and again in 2005-2006. We currently have repeat scores from less than 25% of growers who initially carried out self assessments. After additional self assessment meetings in 2006-2007 we hope to have enough information to make an effective comparison. The other approach was to compare trends in pesticide use from the California Department of Pesticide Regulation Pesticide Use Reporting Data. An analysis of only 2002 data has been made, and additional analyses for subsequent years will be made based on availability of funding.

Activities for the Coming Year

Activity 1

Hold grower self-assessment workshops using the 'Code of Sustainable Winegrowing Workbook'. Our goal is to hold four of these meetings in 2006-7.

How does this activity reduce pesticide risk?

The workbook assesses many aspects of pesticide risk reduction including monitoring and use of economic thresholds for pests, choices for reduced-risk insecticides, miticides, fungicides and herbicides, cultural practices in pest management, use of weather data to inform pest management decisions, monitoring for and release of beneficial insects, sprayer selection, calibration and maintenance, and worker pesticide safety programs.

How will you measure the risk reduction gained from this activity?

1. We will hold 2-4 repeat workshops for growers who first completed a self assessment in 2002, and we will compare the 2002 and 2006 self assessment scores.
 2. The California Department of Pesticide Regulation Pesticide Use Reporting data will be used to compare trends in pesticide use by winegrape growers in Lake County from 2002 to 2005.
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Activity 2

Organize and sponsor meetings, seminars and workshops for growers on topics in sustainable winegrowing. Our goal is to provide 6 meetings. Two of these meetings will be entirely on pest management. Other meetings may contain components on pest management.

How does this activity reduce pesticide risk?

Two of the meetings planned this year are specific to pest management. In June we will co-sponsor a meeting with UCCE on mite and powdery mildew monitoring, biology, and management. In November we will co-sponsor the Mendocino College Pest Management Day. This is an all-day seminar offered by the local community college which brings speakers from throughout California to present current information on IPM, alternatives to pesticide use, and potential new pest threats. Most of the topics at this seminar are specific to winegrapes, the major crop in this area.

How will you measure the risk reduction gained from this activity?

The same measures will be used as for Activity 1.

Activity 3

Help to pay for weather forecasting service and host information from a county-wide network of weather stations on LCWC website. Local weather conditions vary substantially in Lake County because it is a mountainous area. Lake County is fortunate to have a multi-sponsor, multi-purpose weather network with weather stations in most of the agricultural areas of the county. The LCWC currently supports year round weather forecasts and hosts the weather information on our website to provide growers with easy access to local weather information.

How does this activity reduce pesticide risk?

The weather web page includes pest and disease models (such as the UC powdery mildew risk model) that growers can use to make informed decisions on the timing and need for pesticide applications. Accurate local weather information and forecasts also help growers to avoid offsite movement of pesticides due to wind or temperature inversions.

How will you measure the risk reduction gained from this activity?

The same measures will be used as for Activity 1.

Activity 4

Develop locally specific information on sustainable pest and disease management. The LCWC will continue to collaborate with research institutions such as the University of California Cooperative Extension and the United States Department of Agriculture to encourage research on sustainable solutions to local pest problems.

How does this activity reduce pesticide risk?

Research on local pest incidence, biology and control will enable growers to make better-informed decisions. Research projects that investigate low risk approaches to pest management will be pursued.

How will you measure the risk reduction gained from this activity?

If we are successful in finding cooperators and grant resources, the same measures will be used as for Activity 1.