

# National Grape Cooperative's PESP Strategy

## **Describe your Organization's Five-Year Goals Related to Pesticide Risk Reduction**

National Grape is an agricultural cooperative with 1,300 grape producer members who operate 49,000 acres of vineyards. These vineyards are located in the states of New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Michigan, and Washington. National also has members in Ontario, Canada.

We are committed to developing and implementing a Sustainable Viticulture Program for our members. The initial development of the program was undertaken in New York State through a cooperative effort between National Grape, other industry processors and producers, and Cornell University with funding support from the Northeast Center for Risk Management Education and The New York Farm Viability Institute.

Sustainable viticulture is defined as a process that National's member producers will utilize to adopt best management practices that have three components. These are: the practice must be economically sustainable, environmentally sustainable, and socially responsible.

Our primary goal is to have all 1300 National Grape members operating their farms using sustainable viticulture practices by the year 2012.

## **What do you envision doing (broadly) to try to resolve your major issues?**

A Sustainable Viticulture Practices Workbook has been developed that can be readily utilized by National's producer members in the New York, Pennsylvania, and Ohio grape producing regions. The workbook enables individual producers to assess their current level of "sustainability" in four risk categories from low risk to high risk. Individual sections address these risks with respect to soil management, nutrition management, vineyard management, irrigation management, weed management, pest management, and pesticide management. The workbook also contains a section on continuing education designed to assist producers in improving practices, and an action plan section where producers commit to improving specific practices. National will continue to develop new, sustainable viticulture practices through our financial support of research at a number of land-grant universities including Cornell, Penn State, Ohio State, Michigan State, and Washington State.

We are currently evaluating the potential of creating a web-based version of the workbook where information could be entered on-line. This approach is one being put in place in the California grape industry by the California Sustainable Winegrowing

Alliance. The use of a web-based system will enable us to more easily track progress towards improvement.

However, in the interim, or should we not adopt a web-based approach we will track progress through a number of methods so that improvements can be tracked and assessed. These methods will be described below under each Goal and Tactic.

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## **Goal 1 and Tactics**

We began implementing the Sustainable Practices workbook with members in our New York and Pennsylvania grape producing regions in spring of 2007. The process included strong support from New York and Pennsylvania Cooperative Extension. It takes about one hour to complete the workbook.

Measures of success will include our ability to increase the number of participants in the program, and achieve our goal of 100% participation by the year 2012. In addition, we will track progress in achieving individual producer member action plans. We also expect that through implementation of these action plans, both economic and environmental benefits can be measured.

Progress will be tracked by a number of methods. First we will establish annual goals for increasing participant participation in our New York, Pennsylvania, and Ohio grape producing regions. Listed below are our tentative annual goals for participation:

- 2008 – 20%
- 2009 – 40%
- 2010 – 60%
- 2011 – 80%
- 2012 – 100%

Secondly, as discussed above, participants will be asked to establish annual action plans where they will define specific tactics for improvement. We will survey a portion of the participants each year (tentatively 20% per year) asking them to show proof that their action plans have been achieved.

The major need for will be for additional assistance in implementation. National has a limited number of field staff employees who will assist in implementation as well as continuing educational support from Cooperative Extension.

However, additional funding for personnel to assist in implementation will be critical to achieve our goal of 100% participation. Additional staff to educate and assist growers in completing the Workbook, and defining and implementing specific and measurable action plans will be needed.

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## **Goal 2 and Tactics**

Expand the Sustainable Viticulture Program to our Michigan grape producing region. We will work during the winter of 2008 to refine the Sustainable Viticulture Program developed for the New York, Pennsylvania and Ohio grape producing regions to meet the unique aspects of these two states. We will work closely with Michigan State University and the cooperative extension program in developing and implementing the program.

We will use the tactics and measures of success described in Goal #1 to implement the program. Again, additional funding is necessary to provide the educational resources necessary to assist producers in completing the Workbook and in the development and implementation of action plans.

Specifically, we will track progress and measure success by the following methods:

- Completing the development of the Workbook by the end of calendar year 2008
  - Increasing annual participation as a percentage of members participating as follows: 2009 – 25%, 2010 – 50%, 2011 – 75%, 2012 – 100%
  - Participants will be asked to establish annual action plans where they will define specific tactics for improvement. We will survey a portion of the participants each year (tentatively 20% per year) asking them to show proof that their action plans have been achieved.
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## **Goal 3 and Tactics**

Our initial goal in Washington State will be to develop a Sustainable Practices Workbook for this state. Growing conditions and pest issues are vastly different in the Washington grape growing region than those in the other "Eastern" growing regions.

In 2008, National will be working with Washington State University personnel to develop the workbook. We intend to have the workbook completed by July 2008. Initial implementation will begin after that. We will utilize the tactics and measures of success described in Goal #1.

Specifically, we will track progress and measure success by the following methods:

- Completing the development of the Workbook by the end of calendar year 2008
- Increasing annual participation as a percentage of members participating as follows: 2009 – 25%, 2010 – 50%, 2011 – 75%, 2012 – 100%
- Participants will be asked to establish annual action plans where they will define specific tactics for improvement. We will survey a portion of the participants each year (tentatively 20% per year) asking them to show proof that their action plans have been achieved.

Also, additional funding is necessary to provide the educational resources needed in assisting producers to complete the Workbook, and in the development and implementation of action plans.

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#### **Goal 4 and Tactics**

We will continue to support viticulture research programs in the areas of pest, nutrition, and water management that will lead to the development of improved sustainable practices. National will work closely with other processors and wineries, and USDA ARS and CSREES institutions to identify key research priority needs in the above listed areas.

Progress will be tracked over time by following methods:

- Was funding attained for identified priorities
- Where results achieved that would lead to enhance sustainable practices
- Did producers adopt these new practices

Funding for the priorities will be a critical. Currently National and other industry processors and wineries provide some funding. EPA can be helpful in obtaining outside sources of matching funds.