

# Sonoma County Winegrape Commission's PESP Strategy

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

Grape production in Sonoma County must be done in harmony with the community, threatened and endangered fish species and other environmental regulations protecting water, air and vineyard employees. In addition, exotic pests have either been introduced or threaten grape production. These constraints provide grape growers with incentives to minimize pesticide applications and to select reduced risk products whenever possible. Thus our goals in the next 5 years are as follows:

1. Reduce total pounds of pesticide applied in grape production;
2. Increase use of reduced risk materials for pest management;
3. Promote Integrated Pest Management (IPM), sustainable practices, including organic production, and educate growers on the value of an integrated approach to pest management and environmental stewardship.
4. Develop IPM strategies for exotic pests that are threatening current IPM programs, e.g. vine mealybug have infested the county and initial control strategies relied heavily on organophosphate insecticides.

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

Grower and vineyard employee education and outreach are cornerstones for Commission programs. Programs include participation in the Code of Sustainable Winegrowing, IPM grower meetings, Organic Producer grower meetings, and Employee Development Programs in Spanish for vineyard employees. Additionally, the Vine Times newsletters (print and electronic) keep growers updated on issues, programs and results.

In cooperation with University of California Cooperative Extension, a research and grower outreach program has been initiated to develop an IPM program for Vine Mealybug in Sonoma County. Our goals are to limit the spread of this exotic pest and manage infestations with minimal organophosphate use. Exotic pests are increasingly challenging California grape growers and include vine mealybug, light brown apple moth and glassy winged sharpshooter. Pest exclusion from Sonoma County are priorities for these latter two pests.

Endangered species, especially threatened and endangered salmonids, and water and air quality regulations are increasingly affecting farming practices and limiting pest control options. To date, growers have been able to balance the conflicting demands of enhancing environmental quality and maintaining profitable grape production, but the challenges increase every year.

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## **Goal 1 and Tactics**

Increase participation in the Code of Sustainable Winegrowing program and increase the sustainability of our production practices in the next 5 years.

The Code of Sustainable Winegrowing is the foundation for a number of our environmental initiatives. Over 315 organizations/farms have participated in self-assessments of their farming practices and those organizations farm over 40,000 acres or the 60,000 total acres of grape production. We use the self-assessment data to prioritize targeted education that is delivered to growers at monthly IPM and Organic Producer Group meetings each summer. The CA Sustainability Report allows us to measure progress in Sonoma County grower sustainability scores over time. Grower participation is another measure of program success.

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## **Goal 2 and Tactics**

Reduce total pesticide use and increase use of reduced risk pesticides.

CA Pesticide Use Report (PUR) data allow us to monitor pesticide usage, including increases in reduced risk pesticides. There has been a steady downward trend in total pesticide usage (pounds) since 1999, and we hope to continue that trend. Exotic pests are providing challenges to this goal, both increasing insecticide use which had been minimal in recent years and introducing broad spectrum insecticides that disrupt IPM programs.

Growers are increasing use of reduced risk materials, however. New fungicides with very low use rates are being used along with oils that eradicate fungal infections, and suppress grape leafhopper and mites.

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## **Goal 3 and Tactics**

Develop IPM programs to control exotic pests such as vine mealybug (VMB).

Our goal is to minimize use of organophosphate insecticides and to insure that all applications occur when VMB are present on grape leaves or exposed wood tissue. In addition, we will evaluate oils and insect growth regulators, such as Applaud, to keep VMB infestations at acceptable levels.

Should light brown apple moth infest the county, an effective IPM program will be needed.

The Commission will cooperate with University of CA Cooperative Extension to evaluate IPM strategies and communicate effective strategies to growers.

The success measures will include minimizing organophosphate use by developing alternative control strategies and by slowing the spread of this or other exotic pests.

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

Sustain the Employee Development Program, which is taught in Spanish to vineyard employees, so that vineyard employees are educated on pest management, worker safety, and general viticulture.

Vineyard employees are in constant contact with the vines and thus are best positioned to identify pest problems. Early detection is critical to minimizing pesticide use. In addition, vineyard employees need to understand pesticide safety so that a healthy work environment is maintained. They also must properly install erosion control measures in order to keep sediments and associated pesticides from entering our rivers and streams.

Participation in monthly Employee Development Seminars will be the primary success measure.