

# Nebraska Vine Lines

*University of Nebraska Viticulture Program*

*Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources*

*Editors: Dr. Paul Read, Professor of Horticulture & Viticulture*

*Donna Michel, University of Nebraska Viticulture Program*



September/October 2003 Vol. VI, No.

## **Water Management and More Cornhusker Hotel, Lincoln, NE. November 8, 2003**

A workshop featuring information on water management, including drip irrigation methods and equipment will be held Saturday, November 8, 2003, at the Cornhusker Hotel, Lincoln, NE. Registration for this timely workshop will begin at 8:00 am, with the program beginning at 9:00 am. Companies that sell irrigation equipment of various types will have displays of their equipment and will give brief presentations about their technologies and services. Information about soil moisture measurement, how water moves in the soil, plant-water relations, irrigation timing and techniques will be featured. There will also be plenty of opportunity to question speakers and exhibitors and to have discussions with growers and others in attendance.

**Vineyard Establishment** will be a concurrent session that will also take place for part of the day; topics will be geared toward helping people who plan to start a vineyard or have recently begun growing grapes.

The day will conclude with a sampling of some of Nebraska's finest wines. Be sure to mark your calendars and attend this important workshop! A preliminary program is included elsewhere in this issue. Fill out the enclosed Registration Form and mail it immediately!!

The price for this timely workshop is only \$30.00 for NWGGA members and \$35.00 for non-members. This includes coffee during registration, break, lunch and the "ever popular" wine tasting at the close of the day. For more information call Paul Read at 402/472-5136 or Donna Michel 402/472-8747. Or visit our web-site at <http://agronomy.unl.edu/viticulture>. We will be featuring Nebraska wines paired with our lunch choice.

### **The Freezer - Faux Pas?**

We've all done it. Dinner's about ready and oops! – the white wine is warm. So we toss it in the freezer. Bad idea? No. Most wines will be fine (just pull them out well before they start to get slushy– check every 10 minutes). It takes only a little more time, however, to chill wine in a gentler manner, in a bucket filled half with ice and half with cold water (an especially good method for an older, somewhat fragile wine). The bucket should be deep enough so the bottle can be submerged up to its neck in the ice-water bath. To chill a white wine down to 55F takes about:

- 20 minutes in an ice-water bath
- a little more than 1 hour in ice alone
- 3 hours in the refrigerator

## **AUTUMN NOTES – A Review of Happenings in Nebraska's Grape and Wine Industry.**

Yes, by the time this issue of the Nebraska VineLines reaches you, Fall will officially have begun, so it is a good time to reflect on the growing season, on harvest and on the numerous events that have taken place since the last issue.

**The Growing Season:** Most parts of the state received spring and early summer **rainfall** that ranged from adequate to excessive, with a few areas that experienced less than desirable amounts. **Bloom season** in some locales was nearly ideal – sunny, not too hot – while other vineyards were beset with hot, drying winds, resulting in poor fruit set. Timing of anthesis (“cap-fall” or the time of pollen shedding and fruit set) varies with cultivar, so some growers had very good fruit set on a given cultivar while others experienced inadequate set on the same cultivar. Since all of the cultivars commonly grown in Nebraska are self-pollinating (exception: ‘Saint Pepin’), these variable results are attributable to weather at the time of anthesis. Note that if all flowers on a cluster were to set, it would result in a huge misshapen cluster. Next spring, try counting the flower buds on a few clusters before anthesis—you’ll be amazed at the number—I have the students in my “Vines, Wines and You”, class count buds per cluster with surprising results. Later in the growing season, count number of berries per cluster—even for nice, well-filled clusters, the number will usually be a mere fraction of the number

of flower buds originally on the cluster. The large number of buds initially on a cluster (often well over 100) seems to be nature’s way of assuring the vine’s ability to propagate itself.

**Fruit Development to Veraison:** The early part of the growing season was nearly ideal in many vineyards, but the return of extremely hot and dry conditions stressed many young vines. Older, more well-established vines were not seriously affected by these conditions. This is related to the tremendous capacity for grapevines to produce roots that grow to great depths and breadths, exploiting a large portion of the soil profile. One researcher reported six-year-old vines to have roots at a depth of 15 feet, with a spread of over 20 feet! As the summer progressed, some vineyards reported a slowing of berry maturation (“the ° Brix have stayed the same for over a week!”), probably because of the extreme heat, which tended to shut down vine and grape development. Nonetheless, overall fruit quality was good to excellent by the time harvest season rolled around.

**Harvest:** In spite of the aforementioned challenges, most vineyards have harvested greater yields of better quality grapes than in previous years. We have received reports of over eight tons per acre for ‘Edelweiss’ and more than five tons per acre for several other cultivars. Winery operators have indicated a high degree of satisfaction with both yield and fruit quality, suggesting that **Vintage 2003** will result in some wonderful wines that we will all want to sample and buy.

## SUMMER FIELD DAYS SUCCESSFUL

The **Second Annual Nebraska Winegrape Expo** took place at **Mac's Creek Vineyards and Winery** in Lexington, Nebraska, on Saturday, July 19, 2003. Weather for this event was nearly ideal and the more than 70 in attendance were treated to tours of Mac's Creek's developing vineyards, information on vineyard start-up, trellising, cultivars, pest management, marketing and tourism, while gaining insights into development of a new winery. Many attendees commented positively about the program and venue. Those in attendance were invited to also visit **Millenium Wines** "Windswept Vineyard" where they viewed a demonstration of a propane burner for weed control.

The **First Annual Four-State Field Day** was experienced by more than 100 attendees from several states on July 26, 2003. This new event took place on the grounds of the Kimmel Education and Research Center near Nebraska City. The program featured a presentation on

"Agri-tourism" by Cynthia Messer of the University of Minnesota's Tourism Center. Other topics that were presented to those in attendance included Vineyard Development, Trellis and Fencing Systems, Ground Covers and Weed Management, and Equipment, Chemical and Technology Applications. Although the day was among the hottest of the season (100° F+), the program was obviously well-received, with many people staying and asking questions well beyond the allotted times.

Representatives from Iowa State University (Mike White), Kansas State University (Sorkel Kadir) and the University of Nebraska (Paul Read) presented up-dates on the grape and wine industry in their respective states. Appreciation for their outstanding assistance is extended to **Carol Ringenberg** (Kimmel Education and Research Center), **Vaughn Hammond** (National Arbor Day Foundation), **Steve Gamet** and **Donna Michel** (University of Nebraska Viticulture Program). Several attendees visited **Whiskey Run Creek Vineyards and Winery** in Brownville, NE, following the conclusion of the Field Day.

## STATE FAIR WINE FESTIVAL

The First "Vintage Nebraska" Wine Festival held at the State Fair on August 29 and 30, 2003, was judged to be an outstanding first effort. Although State Fair attendance was down overall, many of the folks attending the State Fair availed themselves of the opportunity to sample Nebraska wines, listen to music and hear presentations on the grape and wine industry and to enjoy cooking demonstrations in the big Wine Festival tent. Wines were poured by **James Arthur Vineyards, Lovers Leap Vineyards, Mac's Creek Vineyards and Winery** and **Millenium Wines**. Soon to be opened **Four Winds Winery** and **Soaring Wings Winery** also had exhibits that showcased their winery plans and facilities. **Eric Nelson**, Marketing Committee chair for the **Nebraska Winery and Grape Growers Association** stated that the event was a "great first-year effort" and could become an outstanding part of the State Fair's offerings in future years.

## Notes From the University of Nebraska Viticulture Program Research Vineyards:

Because of space and time limitations only a few highlights will be included in this issue. More detailed data and commentary will be included in future issues and posted on the website: <http://agronomy.unl.edu/viticulture>.

### Cultivar Evaluation

- **Eastern Nebraska.** Solid performers continuing to look good:
  - Reds: deChaunac, Frontenac, Marechal Foch, Saint Croix
  - Whites: Edelweiss, Lacrosse, Seyval Blanc, Vignoles
  - Pinks: DelawareCultivars showing surprising promise:
  - Reds: Cynthiana/Norton, Lemberger, Chambourcin
  - Whites: Chardonel, Traminette, Vidal Blanc, Cayuga White, Riesling.
- Newcomers to keep your eye on: LaCrescent, Prairie Star, Brianna, MN1200, MN1211, NYGR7, NY789, NY62.122.1, NY73.136.1
- **Western Nebraska.** Following a freeze on May 19, 2003, at our Mitchell (north of Scottsbluff) vineyard, considerable damage to the developing shoots was experienced, (they were about four to eight inches long by that date). Many growers in parts of western Nebraska experienced significant crop reduction because of this late freeze. However, the following cultivars exhibited little to no damage
  - Frontenac, Saint Croix, Valiant and Elvira. Niagara and deChaunac had moderate damage, but were able to produce a nearly full crop.
  - DeChaunac is known to produce well on canes emanating from secondary buds.

This low temperature event was a serious problem for growers of less hardy cultivars, but helped demonstrate the outstanding hardiness of cultivars such as Frontenac, Saint Croix, Valiant and Elvira.

#### Vintage:

The word vintage comes from the French words vin, "wine," and age, "age." The vintage, or "wine age," is determined not by the actual debut of the wine, however, but by the year in which the grapes were harvested.

Does vintage really matter? Consider the fact that wine, in all its splendor, is still an agricultural product. Just as peaches taste different in some years than others, so it goes for grapes and, thus, for wines. The fact that the flavor of any given wine changes a little every year (or sometimes a lot) isn't a bad thing. On the contrary, vintages are part of wines' charm.

**Water Management and More  
November 8, 2003  
Cornhusker Hotel, Lincoln, NE**

**8:00** Registration, coffee and rolls, and conversation with the  
Irrigation Exhibitors.

**9:00** **Welcome**

**9:15** Plant Water Relations – Dr. Garald Horst, Dept. of Agronomy and Horticulture

**10:00** **Break**

**Concurrent Sessions - Morning**

**Water Management**

**10:30** Soil Water Holding & Movement  
Biosystems Engineering - UNL

**11:15** Drip Irrigation – Set-up,  
Components and Installation

**DOOR PRIZES**

**12:00** Lunch – Visit Booths

**Nebraska Wine will be served  
With lunch**

**Joint Afternoon Session (All attend)**

**1:45** Winery Regulations in Nebraska  
Updates on current rules and changes

**2:15** Grower Panel: Experiences with Vineyard Irrigation

**3:00** Break - Visit the technical booths

**Technical Sessions**

**3:30 – 4:30** Presentations by Exhibitors - Equipment and materials they sell and the services they  
provide

**4:30** **Wine Tasting**

**DOOR PRIZES -- COME JOIN THE FUN!!!!**

**So You Want to Grow Grapes?**

**10:30** Site Selection, Site Preparation and  
Cultivar Selection

**11:00** Vineyard Costs and Economics

**11:30** The Fruits of Your Labor – Harvest  
Timing and Critical Numbers

**12:00** Lunch - Visit Booths

**Water Management and More**  
**November 8, 2003**  
Cornhusker Hotel, Lincoln, NE

**Name** \_\_\_\_\_

Additional Names \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Advance Registration:

NWGGA Member	\$30.00 ea	X_____	\$_____
Non-Member	\$35.00 ea	X_____	\$_____

Day of registration:           \$40.00 ea    X\_\_\_\_\_    \$\_\_\_\_\_

Cancellation: Pre-registrants canceling prior to October 30th will receive a refund less a \$15 cancellation fee.

**Vineyard or  
Company** \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_

**Make your check payable to:  
University of Nebraska Viticulture Program**

And mail to:

**UNL Viticulture Program  
Agronomy and Horticulture  
Attn: Donna Michel  
377 Plant Science Hall  
Lincoln, NE 68583-0724**

**For additional information contact:  
Paul Read – 402/472-5136 or  
[pread@unl.edu](mailto:pread@unl.edu)  
Donna Michel – 402/472-8747 or  
[dmichel@unl.edu](mailto:dmichel@unl.edu)**

## **NWGGA NEWS**

Thanks to everyone that helped volunteer at the Nebraska State Fair "**Vintage Nebraska - a wine tasting event**" held on August 29th and 30<sup>th</sup>, 2003.

Overall, it was a great event with 4 wineries pouring samples. The UNL- Viticulture Program and the NWGGA both had informational displays. Kimmel Orchard gave out free apple cider samples and the UNL Dairy Store sold cheese and bread. With the food demonstrations and music, it was an action packed weekend. Many people commented they were really happy to see an event like this at the state fair and wanted us to continue it next year. It was definitely a great way to showcase our excellent Nebraska made wines. Thanks to everyone who worked so hard to make this event a success.

**Eric Nelson**  
**Marketing Committee Chairperson**

<p><b>COME JOIN</b></p> 	<p><b>THE NWGGA</b> Write: <b>Deb Barnett, Treas.</b> <b>Big Cottonwood Winery</b> <b>2865 County Rd 1</b> <b>Tekamah, NE 68061</b></p>	 <p><small>NEBRASKA WINERY &amp; GRAPE GROWERS Association</small></p>
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Dues are only \$45 per person or per couple (student membership is \$15). For more information about the NWGGA, its activities and programs, visit the NWGGA website: [www.nwgga.org](http://www.nwgga.org)



University of Nebraska-Lincoln  
Viticulture Program  
377 Plant Science Hall  
Lincoln, NE 68583-0724

## **NOVEMBER 8, 2003 WORKSHOP REGISTRATION MATERIALS ENCLOSED !!!**

The Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources, University of Nebraska-Lincoln. It is the policy of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln not to discriminate on the basis of gender, age, disability, race, color, religion and marital status, veterans status, national or ethnic origin or sexual orientation.

### **CALENDAR OF EVENTS FOR 2003 and Beyond!!**

**November 8, 2003 – Fall Grape Growers Workshop on Water Management and Irrigation Technology. To be held at the Cornhusker Hotel, Lincoln, NE. Call Donna Michel to register: 402/472-8747!!! NOW!!!**

#### **Planning Ahead - Future Forums**

**2004 - March 5 and 6 - Holiday Inn, Kearney, NE**

**2005 - March 4 and 5 - Holiday Inn, Kearney, NE**

**2006 - March 3 and 4 - Holiday Inn, Kearney, NE**

**October 11 and 12, 2003 – Short course in wine. Best Western Regency, Marshalltown, IA. Contact: Mike or Jann Ryerson, Ryerson Winery, Marshalltown, IA. Tele: 641-496-5405 or e-mail: [jann@audus.net](mailto:jann@audus.net).**