

***Viticulture and Enology in Tennessee
SERA IEG-14 Grape Information Exchange Group
2004 Annual Report***

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2. Status of the Grape/Wine Industry:

The interest in grapes and wines continues to grow. Inquiries in this area at the university and in the Division of Marketing of the Tennessee Department of Agriculture exceed any other enterprise. There are 30 wineries in Tennessee at this time with another one slated to open this fall.

There are an estimated 475 acres of commercial vineyards in Tennessee. Several new plantings were established this past spring and site preparation is ongoing for several new vineyards to be set in 2005. Most new plantings are comprised of American and French-American hybrid cultivars, although there have been both *V. vinifera* and muscadine plantings established as well.

The growing season of 2004 was wet and slightly cooler than normal. Black rot caused heavy fruit losses in certain varieties in some areas of the state. A late frost in the northeastern part of the state damaged several varieties, however, the crop throughout most of the state was good. Yields and fruit quality were above normal. Pierce's Disease showed up again in the Marion County vineyards where it has been previously reported, although the severity of it was much less. As in the past, Vidal and Cayuga White were the most affected. Wildlife damage in vineyards continues to increase. Deer, turkey, other birds, raccoons and other wildlife species have caused considerable damage in some vineyards. Proposals to identify the type of wildlife causing damage and to evaluate controls are being developed.

3. University Activities:

Dave Lockwood

Grape root borer (*Vitacea polistiformis*) monitoring is being conducted in 19 vineyards across the state. In accordance with the grape root borer grant procedure, growers were provided with pheromone traps, information on their use and material to enable them to identify the grape root borer adult males from other insects that may be found in the traps. In return, the growers are keeping a weekly log of trap counts. In selected vineyards, monitoring for grape root borer pupal cases under the vines and

within 12 inches of the trunks is being done as well. For the second year, we are cooperating with Ohio State and the University of Georgia in the use of *Heterorhabditis zealandica* nematode for control of grape root borer larvae. Due to difficulties in obtaining the nematodes, the project had to be abbreviated as compared to the 2003 trials.

Cooperative work with the University of Arkansas in screening advanced selections from their breeding program is being conducted at three UT experiment stations. The planting at the Middle Tennessee Experiment Station in Spring Hill (about 50 miles southwest of Nashville) was set in 2002. It contains 13 candidates. Five of these are named varieties. Two of the eight selections are wine types and the rest are seedless. A small harvest was obtained in 2003 and a substantial yield was received this year. Wine is currently being made from the appropriate selections. Vineyards were established in 2003 at the Highland Rim Experiment Station located about 35 miles north of Nashville and at the Plateau Experiment Station in Crossville which is situated on the Cumberland Plateau and about 100 miles east of Nashville. These are identical plantings and contain 16 advanced selections.

In cooperation with Tennessee State University, a vineyard was established this summer at the TSU experiment station in Cheatham Co., about 20 miles west of Nashville. Two trials are being conducted in this planting. The first is a blue grape trial consisting of Concord, Fredonia, Steuben, Buffalo, Sunbelt and Sheridan. The second trial focuses on four training systems: four-cane Kniffin, single wire, high cordon, Geneva double curtain and umbrella Kniffin.

Bill Morris

The second "Wines of the South" competition was held on November 1, 2003. Thirty seven wineries from nine states submitted a total of 251 wines. This is up from 2002 when 19 wineries from seven states submitted 181 wines. This year's competition is set for October 30.

The second edition of PB 1688, "Starting Your Own Wine Business" by Dr. Bill Morris is now available. It contains some minor revisions to make the publication more applicable to other states. For further information on this publication, contact Bill Morris.

Tony Johnston

Dr. Tony Johnston returned from active duty with the military and has resumed his teaching responsibilities at Middle Tennessee State University. Tony is teaching evening classes on wine appreciation and is formulating plans for future viticulture/enology projects.

Tennessee Wine Festivals

The most recent amendment to the Tennessee Farm Winery Act allowed for up to eight wine festivals per year in which wineries would be permitted to pour samples and to sell wine off the winery premises. The Smoky Mountain Wine Festival was held in the fall of 2002 and 2003 and will be held on September 25 this year. Attendance at last year's festival exceeded 700. The first wine festival to be held in Middle Tennessee was on September 15. It was sponsored by the Wilson County Chamber of Commerce and was held at Nashville Super Speedway, the nation's newest NASCAR track. The entire speedway was available for the event. Eighteen wineries poured samples and sold wine, and classes on various aspects of wine appreciation were conducted. The attendance at the event exceeded 3,000. All of the wineries sold out. Plans are currently being developed for the 2005 festival at the same site.