

# In the *vineyard*



**Grape Growers**  
of ONTARIO

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December 2023



# Season's Greeting!



## Happy Holidays!

The Board of Directors and staff of the Grape Growers of Ontario wish all our members the best of the holiday season, and a healthy and prosperous 2024! In the spirit of the season and in-lieu of Christmas cards, a donation has been made to Community Care to support those in our communities in need this holiday season. Please note the Board Office will be closed from December 23rd - January 1st inclusive.

## Modernization of Beverage Alcohol Update

Following months of meetings, the Ontario Government announced a visionary approach to help Ontario's domestic grape and wine industry to thrive and grow into its true potential.

The significant changes outlined in the [joint letter](#), signed by Minister Bethlenfalvy and Board Chair Matthias Oppenlaender, set a course of action that gives the next generation of growers a hopeful future.

On behalf of our Board of Directors, Growers' Committee and all of the grower members in Ontario we thank the Government of Ontario for this legacy announcement.

## Niagara wine industry raises toast to plan to eliminate on-site winery tax

Provincial announcement on plans to modernize booze industry a 'monumental day,' says Wine Growers Ontario president.

By Paul Forsyth Reporter Niagara This Week St Catharines

Tax at winery retail outlets considered regressive for crucial industry in Niagara.

Jakub Lipinski can't help feeling like he and others in Niagara's vast wine industry have been trying to compete with one hand tied behind their backs for years.

But with planned changes announced by the province to modernize

Ontario's booze industry, Lipinski — manager of operations for Big Head Wines in Niagara-on-the-Lake — is hoping it could have a major positive impact on his winery.



In addition to allowing the sale of wine, beer, cider, coolers, seltzers and other low-alcohol beverages at all participating convenience stores, grocery stores and big-box stores across the province by January of 2026, as well as directing the LCBO to promote and prioritize Ontario-made wine and other products to give them more exposure, the government of Premier Doug Ford announced plans to introduce legislation to eliminate a controversial 6.1 per cent tax imposed on wine sales at on-site winery retail outlets. Click [HERE](#) for the article.

# Industry Updates



## Harvest Update

As a result of the weather, the 2023 harvest was delayed. Combined with scheduling delays at winery operations, this meant that many growers harvested much later into the year. Despite the winter damage of 2021-2022, the yield in 2023 was unexpectedly high and at this point 75,296 tonnes have been harvested with a \$112.8 million farm gate value.

## AgriRecovery

The Federal and Provincial governments provided \$6 million in financial support under the Canada-Ontario Grapevine Winter Injury Initiative (2021-2022) to help recover from significant vine damage and loss in the winter of 2021-22.

The damage resulted from a series of severe weather events including periods of drought, heavy rains and extreme cold, from summer 2021 to winter 2022.

The program delay was a result of being over-subscribed, however payments began in November.

## Under the Growing Future Opportunities Initiative - SCAP Replant:

The Governments of Canada and Ontario are investing up to \$8 million through the Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership (Sustainable CAP) to help apple, tender fruit, and wine grape producers grow popular varieties of produce.

Eligible producers can apply to receive 75 per cent of cost-share funding for plants, with plantings to be completed by the end of 2026. Approved projects are to be completed by December 31, 2026. For wine grapes, a varietal plan was required by government before funding will flow. The varietal plan is now complete.

## 2023-24 Bud Hardiness and Survivability Testing

The Grape Growers of Ontario have contracted Ryan Brewster of Brewster Consulting Services to sample and assess bud hardiness levels and bud survivability throughout the 2023-24 winter season for Niagara and Lake Erie North Shore regions.

For the first time, results of the bud hardiness testing and bud survivability assessments will be available on [www.egrape.ca](http://www.egrape.ca) under the 'Overview' menu. Beginning in December, growers will be able to log into the eGrape database with a username and password and be able to select the results that pertain directly to their sub-appellation. Should you require your username and password for eGrape, please contact the GGO.

It is to be noted that the hardiness ratings and survivability assessments are site specific estimates only and the information provided is for general guidance. Any decisions made within your vineyard should be based on your own information and site conditions.

For further information, please contact Nick Lemieux at 905-329-2129.

# CGCN-RCCV Update

## CGCN-RCCV CAP Cluster Project Summaries

CGCN-RCCV administered the national Canadian Agricultural Partnership (CAP) grape and wine science cluster in collaboration with Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC) from April 2018 - March 2023. Year five final project summaries have been posted to CGCN-RCCV's website [HERE](#). For all other yearly cluster project summaries, please visit [www.cgcn-rccv.ca/site/cluster-updates-and-events](http://www.cgcn-rccv.ca/site/cluster-updates-and-events).

## SCAP AgriScience Cluster & AgriAssurance Applications

### **Grape & Wine Science Cluster 2023-2028**

CGCN-RCCV applied to the Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership (SCAP) AgriScience Cluster component in the first quarter of 2023, and we have reason to expect a positive funding decision imminently. If approved, CGCN-RCCV will be managing over a dozen research activities across Canada's four grape growing provinces – BC, Ontario, Québec, and Nova Scotia. Priority research topics include but are not limited to climate change (including cold resilience and heat-stress mitigation), impacts of virus and disease on grape and wine quality, and sustainable viticulture strategies. When CGCN-RCCV is informed of a funding decision, project leads and partner associations will be informed ASAP, with an official public announcement made shortly thereafter.

### **AgriAssurance 2023-2028**

CGCN-RCCV applied to the SCAP AgriAssurance National Industry Association component during the summer of 2023, and a funding decision is expected by early 2024. If approved, this project will provide our official partner nurseries within the Canadian grape and wine industry with subsidized virus-testing costs of up to 50%. CGCN-RCCV is always accepting applications to [Verification](#) and/or [Certification](#) programming. The Verification Program is open to both nurseries for general propagation and growers and/or wineries for Custom Propagation. Please contact CGCN-RCCV Project Manager Ethan Churchill via email at [ethan@cgcn-rccv.ca](mailto:ethan@cgcn-rccv.ca) if you would like to get involved or want more information.

### **Certification Program Amendments**

The CGCN-RCCV Board of Directors is currently amending both the Option 1 and Option 2 [Certification Programs](#) in an effort to align protocols with current technology and industry needs, such as the adoption of tissue culture protocols into our Certification standards. When these amendments are finalized, the improved programs will be uploaded to CGCN-RCCV's website, and an announcement will be made via e-newsletter and social media.

### **Tomato Ringspot Virus webinar – DATE TBD for early 2024**

Our first webinar of 2024 will focus on Tomato Ringspot Virus (ToRSV), which has been highly requested due to the virus' growing presence in eastern Canada and the general lack of familiarity within the industry. A webinar date, speaker announcement, and registration information will come in early January 2024. Stay tuned!

Please subscribe to the e-mailing list [HERE](#), and follow social pages X (formerly Twitter) and Facebook to be informed of upcoming webinar dates and all other things CGCN-RCCV!

There's been growing interest worldwide, including Canada, to further differentiate wines by expressing a region's microbial terroir. Dr. Debbie Inglis, Director of Brock University's Cool, Climate, Oenology and Viticulture Institute (CCOVI) in collaboration with Dr. Ping Liang, Dept of Biological Sciences at Brock, are now using a more accurate, sensitive, and powerful identification tool to identify indigenous yeast species and strains based on High Throughput Sequencing (HTS) instead of traditional sequencing of PCR-amplified genetic markers. Most commercial yeast on the market are of the species *Saccharomyces cerevisiae*, which were selected from European countries, and may not be the best performing yeast for our cool climate regional wines.

This project titled "Microbial terroir: the identification of natural indigenous yeasts during fermentation," was conducted from April 2022 to February 2023 and is ongoing for the 2023-24 fiscal year with expanded goals/objectives. Funding provided by the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA) through the Marketing Vineyard Improvement Program (MVIP).

The objectives of this project were to:

1. Identify target gene regions (markers) in yeast species via bioinformatics analysis using available yeast genome sequencing data best suited for HTS analysis to differentiate species and strains within a species.
2. Compare traditional PCR marker analysis for yeast species and strain identification against the new HTS method using known yeast species for cost, ease of use, and run time.
3. Develop a computer pipeline for streamlined HTS-data analysis and create a microbial sequence database to facilitate future species/strain identification.

Using these methods, natural yeast isolates from vineyards and fermentations can be collected, identified, and tested for application in commercial wine fermentation in four steps. First, to isolate yeast strains, spontaneous fermentations were trialed on two red wines and two white wines at a local Niagara region winery. Yeast was

Next, isolates were identified to species level. Of the 600 isolates characterized, 12 were *S. uvarum* unique to the winery, and 588 were *S. cerevisiae*. For the third step, 6 of the 12 *S. uvarum* isolates were retested in small scale fermentations (40L) of Cabernet Franc at CCOVI. All isolates fermented to dryness with no faulted wines, and the winemaker was satisfied with the informal sensory evaluation of the wines and plans to move forward with commercial trials in the future. Of the six isolates tested, three were found to be unique strains based on microsatellite gene marker analysis. Lastly, another *S. uvarum* yeast isolate, CN1, was trialed in a commercial Cabernet Franc appassimento fermentation at a local winery. CCOVI has been characterizing this yeast isolate for a few years and compared an active dry form of the yeast to a commercial yeast EC1118, and also compared preparing the yeast in a paste format at a local yeast company. CN1 completed commercial fermentations of appassimento wine with significantly lower acetic acid

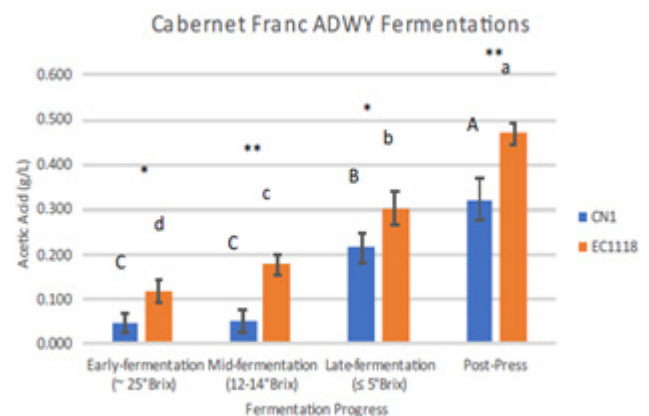


Figure 1. *S. uvarum*, CN1, fermentations show lower acetic acid production than commercial yeast, EC1118.

# OGWRI Research Spotlight

production when compared to *S. cerevisiae* EC1118 commercial yeast. Yeast isolates from a vineyard or winery operation may allow the winery to differentiate their wines in the marketplace by taking advantage of yeast biodiversity. By reducing the costs and the time required to do the analysis, HTS will open the door for more wineries to embark on this approach to characterize their own microbial terroir that may have unique positive properties not present in commercial selections. Having a local yeast company able to prepare batches of the yeast for commercial production will facilitate the ability of wineries to utilize their own isolates. Future research will focus on the grow up process to prepare and utilize the paste format of the yeast to improve viability and function in commercial fermentations.

CCOVI is working towards offering yeast isolation, identification and storage of culture preparations as a service, and will continue to work with the local yeast company for paste preparations for commercial fermentations. Please visit [www.brocku.ca/ccovi/analytical-services-laboratory/](http://www.brocku.ca/ccovi/analytical-services-laboratory/) if you would like to discuss these services.

For more information on this project and other MVIP research, please visit: [www.ontariograpeandwinereseach.com/en/mvip](http://www.ontariograpeandwinereseach.com/en/mvip).

For information on additional OGWRI funded research projects please visit our website [www.ontariograpeandwinereseach.com](http://www.ontariograpeandwinereseach.com).

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# 2024 Production Insurance

It's application and renewal time for the Production Insurance Fruit Policy. Now is the time to review coverage options to make sure they meet the current needs of the farm business for the year ahead. New customers can contact Agricorp to apply.



## Making coverage changes?

Going forward, fruit customers have until January 1, 2024 to make coverage changes, giving them more time to understand risks for the year ahead.

2024 premium rates and program coverage options are now available on [agricorp.com](http://agricorp.com). Adjusters are available to help walk customers through their coverage options.

## Timing of 2024 renewals and more information

Now is the time to get ready for the year ahead. Customers will receive their 2024 renewal packages in mid-December, as long as they've reported their 2023 yields. Existing customers should review their renewal packages to make sure their coverage options meet the current needs of their farm businesses. Customers who don't receive a renewal package by mid-December should contact Agricorp.

## Update to grape coverage

Agricorp worked with the grape industry and governments to permanently add yield buffering to grape coverage. This change means that extreme or unusual yields are buffered up or down to keep coverage stable and to reflect a customer's production potential. Yields that are 30% lower or higher than a grape grower's 5-10 year final average yield are buffered. For more information, see the Final Average Yield feature sheet on [agricorp.com](http://agricorp.com).

Full Fruit Policy information is available on [agricorp.com](http://agricorp.com) with all the information needed to participate, including premium rates, important dates and other information about how the program works.



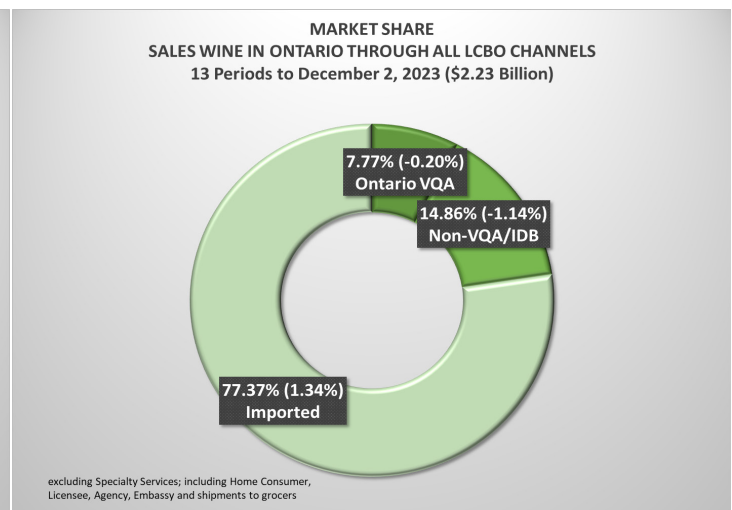
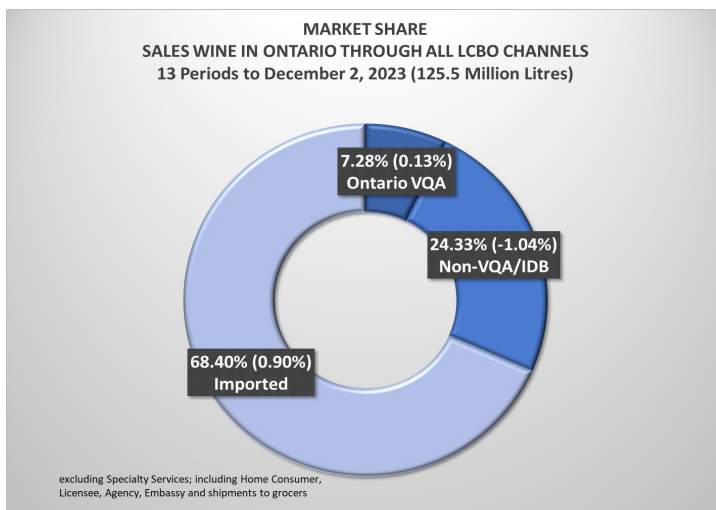
# Wine Sale Update - Period 9

All sales statistics that follow are for the 13 Periods ending December 2, 2023, unless noted and reflect sales through ALL LCBO channels excluding Specialty Services; including Home Consumer, Licensee, Agency, Embassy and shipments to Grocers. All data exclude flavoured wines and ciders.

## Highlights:

- VQA wine sales overall are -11.8% for rolling 13 periods (litres)
  - VQA wine sales are down at the LCBO stores (-9.9% litres)
  - VQA wine sales in grocery are declining (-18.7% litres)
- Ontario Non-VQA/IDB is declining (-3.9%)
  - Ontario non-IDB (100% Ontario) is declining (-17.7%)
  - Ontario IDB is down (-3.1%)

## Market Share (LCBO, Vintages, Grocery)



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## Foundation in Viticulture (Online)

**WHEN?** February 26 to April 12 (7 weeks)

**WHO?** Winery and vineyard owners; winemakers and production staff; seasonal or full time vineyard employees; winery non production staff; or wine enthusiasts who are seeking a formal foundation in grape growing.

Just 25 spots available to ensure the best possible learning experience.

**MEET YOUR INSTRUCTOR**— Ryan Brewster, owner of Brewster Consulting, with over 20 years of experience consulting for the grape growing industry.

**WHAT?** CCOVI's Foundation in Viticulture provides:

- An overview of viticulture and its practical application in the vineyard.
- Study the intersecting elements of site, grapevine and grower, and how it impacts grape quality.
- Asynchronous delivery; work at your own pace.
- Weekly live (online) sessions with your instructor to review content, address questions and the opportunity to network with peers in the program from across Canada!



**CONTACT** for more info: [ccovi@brocku.ca](mailto:ccovi@brocku.ca)

# Classified Ads

## For Sale

### **228L Barrels for sale**

8x 228L wine barrels for sale. Suitable for furniture only. Asking \$100 plus HST per barrel. Please contact Alex at [abaines@hiddenbench.com](mailto:abaines@hiddenbench.com) if interested.

### **48 Used Stackable Steel Barrel Racks**

Qty 48 Used Stackable Steel Barrel Racks 44-inch x 30 inch, suitable for 53 - 59 gallon barrels. Selling as a lot \$4800 + tax firm. Pickup location 35 minutes west of London, Ont. just off the 401. Call or text 519-465-3787

### **Plastic Storage Sheets for Wine Bottles for Sale**

Plastic storage sheets for finished wines available. Two types for sale. Burgundy/Bordeaux bottles format which holds 38 bottles per layer and Riesling bottle format which holds 36 per layer. Can be stacked up to 15 layers high for finished wine storage instead of cardboard. These sheets are re-usable. \$5 plus HST per sheet. Contact Alex Baines for more information at [abaines@hiddenbench.com](mailto:abaines@hiddenbench.com).

### **Neutral 228L French Oak Barrels for Sale**

Very high quality used French Oak 228L barriques available. Variety of coopers, around 10 years old. All have been meticulously stored when not being used for wine with complete fill of Water/KMS/Citric water solution. Steamed & Ozoned before each fill and hot water pressure washed after emptying. Priced - \$350 per barrel plus HST. Please contact Alex at [abaines@hiddenbench.com](mailto:abaines@hiddenbench.com) if interested.

### **1500L variable capacity tank**

Selling two used 1500L variable capacity tanks. For more pictures: <https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1-Cf-rBHjmggnfdp5dVwr0ZuciHNbe9tg?usp=sharing> \$3300 each, or \$6300 for both. Email [sourwoodcider@gmail.com](mailto:sourwoodcider@gmail.com) for more information.

### **Used Icewine Netting for Sale**

Icewine Netting for sale. There are 5 rolls. They have been used for the past 6 years. In as is condition. If interested, contact Robert Bator at 905-684-4251.

### **Geotextiles for sale**

Three brand new rolls of Randall Manufacturing Vine Fit geotextiles. 150m long x 1.14m wide. \$195 each. Located in PEC. Contact Isabelle at [melville@melvilleroad.ca](mailto:melville@melvilleroad.ca) or 416-418-3954.

### **Cattle manure for sale**

Cattle manure for sale/ delivered. Ecocert organic sources are available as well. Please call/text 905-988-3288

### **Cedar posts - 2", 3", 4"**

Vertical line posts or end posts are available now. Sustainability sourced cedar posts from 2" to 8" up to 16' long upon request. Thousands of 8' in stock and can be used for all organic operations. Can Dan @519 534 2067#1 or email [dan@hayestimber.ca](mailto:dan@hayestimber.ca)

# Classified Ads

## Wanted

### Looking for used electric pruners

Looking for quality used electric mechanical pruners. Email [tom\\_obrien@coopershawkvineyards.com](mailto:tom_obrien@coopershawkvineyards.com) for more information.

### Looking for bird bangers, Wood posts and Anchors

Please contact me if you have any of these for sale. 289-969-0502 John.

### 1-2 Tonne capacity press

Boutique winery looking for a 1-2 T capacity press for next season's vintage. Call Joe 905-980-4413

### Donation of 10 potted vines

CCOVI is looking for a donation of 10 potted vines for an OGWRI/MVIP & Fed-Dev project titled "*Laboratory testing trials of entomopathogens as a biocontrol agent against Grape Mealybug.*" Any varieties are appreciated, but preferably with leaves and bark intact. If you are willing to donate, please contact Dr. Malkie Spodek at [mspodek@brocku.ca](mailto:mspodek@brocku.ca).

To place classified ads in the newsletter and online, visit [grapegrowersofontario.com](http://grapegrowersofontario.com), or contact the Board Office at [info@grapegrowersofontario.com](mailto:info@grapegrowersofontario.com) or 905-688-0990 ext 224



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[localgrapes.ca](http://localgrapes.ca)

## GGO Services

- Grape Pricing
- eGrape
- Chemical Registration
- Crop Insurance Requirements
- Business Risk Management and Disaster Risk Programing
- Agricultural Policy
- Framework Bridge Funding
- Offshore Farm Labour Program
- Farm Labour Legislation
- Grape Standards
- Grape Inspection
- Grape Research
- Grape Industry Promotion
- Government Lobbying
- Land Use Issues
- Nutrient Management
- Market Research
- Liaise with Industry and Other Farm Organizations



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