

## News Release

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### CALIFORNIA VINTNERS AND GROWERS INTRODUCE CODE OF SUSTAINABLE WINEGROWING GUIDELINES

SAN FRANCISCO, CA - Wine Institute and the California Association of Winegrape Growers (CAWG) today introduced to the California wine community a code of best management practices and accompanying 490-page workbook promoting social responsibility and environmental stewardship.

Named the "Code of Sustainable Winegrowing Practices," the program is being unveiled to California's vintners and growers as a voluntary self-assessment tool with information on how to conserve natural resources, protect the environment and enhance relationships with employees, neighbors and local communities.

"With California's population growing at half a million people annually, we are taking steps to assure that California winegrowers will have viable and outstanding land for growing winegrapes and producing world-class wines. In an increasingly competitive global marketplace, it is in our interest to farm responsibly with the best science available," said John De Luca, president and CEO of the Wine Institute, a public policy advocacy group, representing more than 600 California wineries.

The California Department of Food and Agriculture has recognized the importance of this project by recently awarding a \$280,000 grant for widespread implementation of the Code's sustainable practices. Wine Institute and CAWG will be working closely with regional groups throughout the state to hold educational workshops to help the industry adopt the Code.

The workbook includes 13 chapters of practical guidelines, including information on winegrape growing, soil management, pest management, ecosystems management, water and energy conservation, materials handling and human resources. The workbook has a built-in scientific measurement system which will help track the industry's progress in adopting the guidelines.

"This workbook laces together the impressive work done at the regional level regarding growing practices, with groundbreaking information related to winemaking and improving relations with employees, neighbors and communities. It is really the first of its kind," said Karen Ross, president of CAWG, an organization whose growers represent about 60 percent of the total annual grape crush.

"This project is important to my family. If we are going to maintain a winegrape growing operation, we have to be able to sell and compete against foreign competition. This is the 'leg up' that will help our operation as well as improve winegrape quality," said Stephen Schafer of Schafer Ranch and CAWG chairman.

More than 50 members of the Wine Institute and the California Association of Winegrape Growers worked on the document for two years. Environmentalists, regulators, university educators and social equity groups provided expertise to the project as well. Project organizers say that the workbook will be updated periodically to reflect current industry advancements.

"This industry driven project recommends many practices that California vintners and growers are already doing. We believe the wine community will embrace the Code because it is the right thing to do and improves wine quality at the same time," said Michael Honig, chairman of the committee that developed the workbook and general manager of Honig Vineyard and Winery.