

## Project Description

### Project Description of Sustainable Winegrowing Program

#### PRODUCTS AND DESIRED OUTCOMES

The Wine Institute and the California Association of Winegrape Growers (CAWG) have teamed up on a statewide project to:

- Develop a statewide Code of Sustainable Winegrowing Practices (SWP);
- Produce accompanying winegrower and vintner guidebooks to facilitate implementation; and
- Build a credible measurement system to document and communicate statewide adoption of sustainable practices by voluntary subscribers.

The desired outcomes for this project are:

- Voluntary adoption by the entire wine community of the high standards for sustainable practices presented in the code;
- Widespread use of the winegrowing and winemaking guidebooks in business planning, training, execution and analysis;
- Use of the statewide measurement system to provide science-based information to evaluate progress in the adoption of sustainable practices by the wine community, our neighbors, and the larger public and private stakeholder communities; and
- Validation that self-governance, education and an open dialogue with neighbors, communities and other stakeholders will enhance the economic viability and future of the wine community.

The SWP project defines sustainability as winegrowing and winemaking practices that are sensitive to the environment, responsive to the needs and interests of society-at-large, and are economically feasible to implement and maintain.

#### Leadership and Background

The project is guided by the Wine Institute's Sustainable Winegrowing Practices (SWP) Subcommittee which includes significant representation from CAWG. The Wine Institute and CAWG have contracted RealToolbox (RTB), a sustainable agriculture and resource conservation consulting firm, to work with staff, SWP Subcommittee members, regional grower and vintner associations, and other stakeholders including the environmental and social equity communities to develop and refine the code, guidebooks and measurement system. Dr. Jeff Dlott is leading the consulting team that includes Dr. Cliff Ohmart with the Lodi-Woodbridge Winegrape Commission and other consultants.

The vision and impetus for this project evolved from the Central Coast Vineyard Team and Lodi-Woodbridge Winegrape Commission vineyard self-assessment systems, WineVision's Sustainability Forum, requests to the Wine Institute and CAWG from regional winegrower and vintner organizations for statewide leadership and assistance, and interest and expertise from the Wine Institute's Communications Committee and CAWG's Board of Directors. Leadership and funding provided by the Wine Institute and CAWG led to the formation of this project. The project is building on the impressive work in sustainable practices by many regional winegrower and vintner organizations, companies, researchers and individuals.

#### Approach and Status Report

RTB has been working with the SWP Subcommittee to refine project components. Findings from meetings with the SWP Subcommittee, CAWG Board of Directors, several regional winegrower and vintner organizations, and individual interviews are presented below.

**Audiences.** The following three audience categories were identified: primary audiences-winegrowers & winemakers; secondary audiences-employees, buyers, input suppliers, neighbors and local communities; and the larger audiences-media, policymakers, regulators, the environmental community and consumers.

**Framework.** The SWP Subcommittee decided to use a generalized framework that will allow the code to be adapted to specific frameworks (i.e., ISO 14001) in the future. The following set of terms and definitions forms a logical, flexible and credible framework to build the code, guidebooks and measurement system:

- Principle &mdash; A guiding sense of the requirements and obligations of right conduct.
  
- Criteria &mdash; Rules for evaluating or testing something. Criteria form the basis to evaluate adherence to principles. They do not imply comparisons, standards do.
  
- Standard &mdash; Considered by an authority or by general consent as the basis for comparison. Standards are the rules used to make comparisons.
  
- Metric &mdash; Measures of conditions, operations, and/or management practices. Metrics can be quantitative or qualitative, direct measures or indicators.
  
- Guideline &mdash; Guide or indication of future course of action. Guidelines are the knowledge tools that allow a user to learn and apply practices and processes to achieve desired outcomes.

Principles. Given the primary audiences, principles that correspond to major operational areas for winegrowers and winemakers were selected. These include: wine quality, viticulture, soil management, pest management, water management and conservation, human resources, neighbor and community relations, waste reduction and recycling, energy conservation, crush, fermentation, aging, bottling, materials management, and habitat conservation and restoration. Some areas will overlap while others will be unique to the winegrowing or winemaking guidebooks. These operational principles fall under the umbrella of the overarching three "E" sustainability principles (Environment, Equity & Economics).

Guidebooks Structure and Content. There was a consensus for adapting the format and content of the Lodi Winegrower's Workbook to produce a statewide SWP template. The consultants have begun the process of meeting with regional associations and individuals to discuss the adaptation of the Workbook. They are asking groups and individuals to review the workbook and recommend criteria that: (1) need to be added; (2) need refinement; and (3) currently meet the regional conditions. The purpose is to identify and refine a common set of statewide criteria that can be measured across all winegrowing regions as well as determine the set of criteria that need to be adapted to meet the specific regional requirements. Developing the region-specific criteria will be part of the initial implementation efforts.

The consultants are working with the SWP Subcommittee and meeting with regional organizations and individuals to build a statewide template for winegrowing, refine the operational principles for winemaking, draft winemaking sustainability criteria, and develop the measurement system. The project timeline includes the production and review of several chapters in December 2001, a full draft of the code, guidebooks and measurement system for review in winter 2002, and full rollout in summer 2002.

## CONTACT INFORMATION

The SWP Subcommittee and project consultants invite input on the development, refinement and implementation of the code, guidebooks and measurement system. For further information contact Karen Ross, CAWG President at (800) 241-1800 or Dr. Jeff Dlott, Sure Harvest at (831) 477-7797 Email: [jdlott@sureharvest.com](mailto:jdlott@sureharvest.com).