



Riverland Wine Industry Development Council Inc.



Bill Moularadellis.

2006 CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Mr. Bill Moularadellis presented the following report to the Council's AGM in November 2006.

The Riverland Wine Industry Development Council is the peak regional industry body and is charged with progressing the economic interests of the entire Riverland wine industry. It has to ensure it satisfies the interests of all stakeholders and provide a mix of technical, extension and marketing initiatives for the benefit of growers and winemakers with short, medium and longer term horizons.

As Chairman, I am privileged to be among many participants and supporters of our industry, all of whom help guide the Riverland's interests onto this Council's agenda. I believe that both the Council and its sister body, the Riverland Winegrape Growers' Association, have developed and progressed the Riverland Wine Industry Management Plan in a responsible manner in these difficult times for the region. It must be borne in mind that both organisations are literally only a few years old, and yet I am confident that each is playing an important role at the local, State, and indeed the National level.

Our largest financial project CropWatch has completed another successful year and 2007 shall see a new format with improved commentary and advice. In response to a survey of users carried out this year, we are continuing to increase the spread of stations so the information we provide is more representative of actual and localised weather events to each specific vineyard.

The Viticulture Technical Group has worked diligently to identify research and development initiatives within the region, and have acted to ensure that wherever possible a program of activity

and extension is linked to each. Industry Development Officer; Tim Smythe helped conduct a number of grower workshops, with emphasis on providing background information to growers contemplating vineyard mothballing.

The Marketing Committee oversaw the release of its Riverland Wine and Food Guide in conjunction with Food Riverland, to the acclaim of not only the local producers in the region, but to wine writers and wine educators across Australia. Within only a few months of its release, stocks of this Guide are running low due to exceptional demand. Last year, the RWIDC convened a forum of winemakers and wine industry executives within the region to discuss our efforts to lift the identity of Riverland wines, and I am pleased to report that this forum gave a resounding endorsement for the direction that we are taking. 2007 will see the development and unfolding of further strategies to lift awareness of our region as the home of 'Australia's most popular wine'.

Amongst this activity, this last year has for the Riverland wine industry been one of our darkest hours. For the first time in almost a generation, the full brunt of a supply and demand imbalance has hit home resulting in a significant proportion of our vintage not being harvested.

All industry participants must learn to act in ways that recognise the long lead times between when vineyard investment decisions are made and the development of sustainable markets built on the foundations of strong retail and consumer brand franchises.

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The Riverland is Australia's largest wine growing region and in 2006 produced 464,000 tonnes, 51% of South Australia's and 26% of our national crush.

We are also in the fortunate position of having carved a minor quality and perception premium amongst international (mainly European) retailers compared to the other major inland (warmer) regions, with the South Australian GI now being preferred to the all encompassing and more generic South Eastern Australia.

On this we must continue to build, and the initiatives and resources of the Riverland Wine Industry Development Council should continue to be applied to advance the economic prosperity of the Riverland wine industry first and foremost.

While I recognise that there is a diverse range of stakeholders, many of whom do not have their roots within this local community, I urge a united and co-ordinated effort to focus our resources and activities on those initiatives that have a direct benefit to the Riverland as opposed to wider industry agendas.

Importantly, we must learn from our mistakes and continue to build general customer and market recognition for our individual brands under the Australia brand umbrella and importantly continue to strive to achieve a market premium for wine of Riverland origin.

Growing more and better grapes more efficiently is a reducing part of the success equation. We must achieve a greater recognition and premium for our wine as it is this that shall provide a more stable economic return and insulate us from the continued increases in efficient production from all corners of the globe, many of which are now endowed with as much, if not more, natural competitive advantage.

Over the last 20 years we have lead the world in technical innovation and have reaped its benefits with increased international market share. Globalisation, increasing retailer and market consolidation is a reality, and we must embrace it or suffer from its consequences.

As in many spheres of human endeavour the best decisions and initiatives are often made in the most adverse circumstances and I believe that the Riverland has a unique opportunity to carve its rightful position as Australia's most popular wine and build a platform for long-term sustainable economic returns for all our stakeholders. We must do this by directing our resources and endeavours to those areas of development that shall place us at the forefront of the international market place as we can best predict those to be in the future. We should not apply those rules that have led to our success to date, as our competitors, by their observations and competition with us, shall not allow yesterday's formula to be the one that leads us to continued success.

We have as much opportunity to be successful in this next generation as any of our competitors, we just need to be prepared to embark onto a new paradigm that has not previously been part of our agenda.

In closing, I would like to thank our Executive Officer Cameron Hills for his tireless efforts through the year, and also to welcome and acknowledge Industry Development Officer Tim Smythe and Marketing & Promotions Officer Sandy Iosefellis for their work.

I would also like to acknowledge the guidance, support and efforts of my fellow Councillors Rosanne Healy, Michael Roy, Glen Arnold, Keryn Gorman, John Angove, Paul Kassebaum and Kevin Pfeiffer, who freely contribute their gracious time and experience for the benefit of the whole Riverland Wine Industry.

Bill Moularadellis

Chairman
Riverland Wine Industry
Development Council Inc.



**Riverland
Wine Industry
Development
Council Inc.**

2006-07 RWIDC Councillors

Ms Roseanne Healy (Chairman)
Mr Bill Moularadellis (Deputy Chairman)
Mr John Angove (Treasurer)
Ms Keryn Gorman
Mr Paul Kassebaum
Mr Kevin Pfeiffer
Mr Glen Arnold
Mr Mike Mason

Staff:

Mr Cameron Hills
(Executive Officer)
Mr Tim Smythe
(Industry Development Officer)
Ms Sandy Iosefellis
(Marketing & Promotions Officer)

This newsletter was produced by the Riverland Wine Industry Development Council Incorporated. The views expressed by contributors do not necessarily reflect those of the Council.

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SURVIVING THE DROUGHT

The November seminar that brought the regional industry together to discuss the drought and its impacts on winegrape growing.

On the 22nd of November 2006 some 200 winegrape growers, from around the Riverland, gathered as the industry confronted the likely outcomes of managing a 60% water allocation.

Dr. Mike McCarthy (SARDI) spoke about the need to plan; financial and water budgets are a must when considering the most appropriate way to manage a finite (currently water needs to be considered as such) resource in short supply. Staying informed is critical if plans and practice are to mirror reality.

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Noel Johnston, SAMDBNRMB

SURVIVING THE DROUGHT

Knowing at which stages in the vines growth it is most vulnerable to stress helps in managing the productive capacity of the vineyard both in the long and short term. Excessive stress through the flowering to fruit set period has the potential to, not only, reduce the current year's crop but also impact the following year's crop too. Stress during veraison is also likely to have detrimental impacts. Fruit quality can suffer and the possibility of reduced accumulation of carbohydrate reserves can leave the vine susceptible to vine health and productivity problems. The post harvest period of a vine can often be overlooked but some 10-15% of the vines annual water requirement is consumed during this period.

Dr. McCarthy stressed that when faced with restricted water allocations it's important that plans consider the required position of the vines at the end of the season. Running out of water in the middle of the season needs to be avoided as the impacts are likely to be seriously deleterious. Knowing how and when the vines require and use water is important in developing a plan. This information can be easily accessed and can currently be found in Dr. McCarthy's presentation on cropwatchonline.com.au

Mr. Noel Johnston provided the attendees with practical in-field demonstrations designed to convey the importance of knowing soil, plant and water interactions. Irrigation systems need to be operating efficiently not only to conserve water via delivery but also to ensure water is available in the rootzone when the vine needs it. The SA MDB NRMB, for whom Noel works, are available to assist growers with system checks and crop surveys. Phone (08) 8582 4477 for more details.

A panel session involving Ms. Teresa Heuzenroeder (Yalumba), Mr. Shane Phillips (Tandou) and Mr. Andrew Weeks (Jubilee Park Vineyards) engaged those in attendance with discussions on how the drought was likely to impact their respective businesses and how some hard decisions would have to be made to ensure water was directed to the most productive and profitable outcomes. Communication with wineries was raised as a key issue, both growers and wineries need to work together to achieve results that are of mutual benefit. The information received from wineries is critical in the decision making process of vineyard owners and managers.



'Surviving the Drought' Workshop in October.

Reduced water allocations and drought are likely to bring increased variation and recognising how the hydraulics of different soils change as they dry is important in managing that variation. Sands can prove difficult to irrigate once the profile is dry and some can actually become water repelling. Clays too can have altered hydraulic natures as the moisture status changes. If a clay soil dries to the point of cracking, preferential pathways can open. Water movement is known to follow a path of least resistance and cracks can result in water moving past the rootzone.

Like anything that deals with the dynamics of people and nature, it is practically impossible to espouse a generic answer applicable to all. Different people and properties are exposed to different circumstances and will have different approaches to management. Having an intimate knowledge of how a business operates, how a property is set-up (varieties, rootstocks, infrastructure etc.), its ability to absorb risk and the desired end results will ultimately dictate the decision making processes.

CONTINUE TO STAY INFORMED

Where to from here...

A POST HARVEST SEMINAR INITIATING THE FLOW OF INFORMATION

The RWIDC and its associated sub-committee the Riverland Viticulture Technical Group are currently working with the Australian Society of Viticulture and Oenology and the Barossa Valley Technical Group to develop a seminar program that will initiate the information flow required for the next growing season.

Water supply remains as a key issue facing winegrape growers. The situation currently looks grim but things can change and a number of scenarios may need to be considered. The seminar program is being designed to obtain speakers that will provide an update on the likely water supply issues facing South Australian Irrigators in season 2007/08.

The program will also tap into the experience of Riverland winegrape growers who have been faced with the reality of making some difficult decisions on their properties over the last several years. Separating emotion from economics is incredibly difficult, particularly when

involvement with the land has become a way of life, but the drought combined with market difficulties left some with few options. The lessons learnt from the experience of others are often invaluable... sometimes opportunity can be found in the face of adversity.

The impacts of drought and possible management tools will also be considered with speakers currently secured for topics such as rootstock performance in drought conditions, crop load management, plant physiology (vine health) and the use of mulches.

The seminar will be held at the Chaffey Theatre on **Thursday the 3rd of May** and an admittance fee of \$25 will be charged. ASVO members are able to secure tickets at a discounted price of \$15.

Don't forget the speaker notes from the 'Surviving the Drought' seminar are available in the Riverland section of www.cropwatchonline.com

Coming soon to the Chaffey Theatre...

DROUGHT RESPONSE SEMINARS

'Where's The Water?' Managing the Impacts of The Big Dry in Your Vineyard

TIME	ACTIVITY
8.30	Coffee
9.00	Welcome Cameron Hills, Executive Officer, Riverland Wine Industry Development Council
9.05	Future Water Resources Speaker: Mr Paul Harvey, DWLBC
MAKING DECISIONS WITHOUT EMOTION	
9.30	Managing your vineyard with less water; the decision making process <i>Case Study 1:</i> Local grower – 'Taking care of business' - the mothballing experience. Mr Bruce Hampel <i>Case Study 2:</i> Local grower – 'Saving a drop by converting to drip', Mr David Zadow <i>A Business Case:</i> Rabobank
10.20	Morning Tea
VINEYARD MANAGEMENT TOOLS	
11.00	Plant Physiology – The impacts of drought Dr Brian Loveys
11.25	Tools for crop load management Mr John Crocker
11.50	The impacts of reduced irrigation and rootstock use Mr Phil Nicholas, Mr Nick Dry, Yalumba rep TBA
12.15	The use of mulches Ms Katie Webster
12.35	Summary – Speaker TBA
1.00	Close



2007

THURSDAY MAY 3, 2007

Tickets \$25. ASVO Members \$15

Initiated by the Riverland & Barossa Viticulture Technical Groups

Held in conjunction with the Australian Society of Viticulture & Oenology.

Grapevine Management Options in Times of Drought and Water Restrictions



SOUTH AUSTRALIAN WINE
INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION

Scholefield Robinson
HORTICULTURAL SERVICES

KEEPING OUR MEMBERS INFORMED

INTRODUCTION

Wine growing regions in southern Australia generally have Winter and Spring dominant rainfall with drier conditions in Summer and Autumn.

A drought will normally result in vines requiring more water than is available from rainfall, and stress will occur.

A dry Winter may require irrigation early in Spring, using valuable water resources earlier in the growing season.

Irrigation must be rationed to minimise or avoid water stress at critical times, so that the best yield and quality is produced from the limited amount of water available for irrigation.

BEFORE THE BEGINNING OF THE SEASON

1. Know how much water you need
2. Know how much water you have
3. Adjust your quality and yield targets if required

DURING THE SEASON

4. Monitor your water applications
5. Adjust applications as necessary

AT THE END OF THE SEASON

6. Review your water usage
7. Review the quality and yield achieved
8. Plan best and worst case scenarios for next season

CONSEQUENCES OF A DROUGHT YEAR

Water issues

- Soil profile not full at end of Winter.
- Less water in dams, rivers, lakes and aquifers.
- Allocations of irrigation water may be reduced.
- Salinity is usually higher.
- Irrigation may commence earlier than 'normal' in the season.
- Often more wind with greater evaporation.
- Need more water when you have less.

Intensity of frost events may be higher due to dry soils, leading to consumption of water for frost mitigation.

Vine issues

- Shoot growth may be less with fewer functional leaves to ripen the crop.
- Flowering may occur earlier than in a 'normal' year.
- Stress may result in significant basal leaf loss, increasing the risk of sunburn of the fruit.
- If the functioning leaf area is not sufficient the vine may not be able to fully ripen the crop.

One benefit of drier conditions is lower disease pressure.

Questions for a 'normal' season

- How much water did you use?
- Yields, quality, vigour?
- Any leaf burn or early senescence?
- Do you really know what happens in your vineyard?

Questions for a drought year

- What is the reduced water allocation?
- How does this compare with what was used last year?
- Can I cope with this?

WATER BUDGETING

In a drought water application will need to be prioritised to the most valuable blocks (discuss with your winery if necessary). Other blocks will be given reduced volumes with consequent effects on production and quality.

A key question in applying reduced or fixed volumes of water, is how to apply that water across the season to ensure that the level of stress applied to the plantings is minimised and spread evenly across the season, with consideration given to the most sensitive growth stages. See page 2 for more details.

Preparing a water budget will avoid applying too much water too early, and running out before the end of the season.

HOW MUCH WATER AND WHEN? MONITORING IS ESSENTIAL!

It is important to know how deep the rootzone is and how much water is required to wet the rootzone.

Dig holes between the drippers and out into the mid row approximately 24 hours after an irrigation to determine the depth and width of the wetted front. A 'dig stick' is a useful tool for this job.

The CSIRO 'Full stop' device provides a visual indicator of when moisture has reached the rootzone.

For more information see <http://www.fullstop.com.au>

Adjust the length of the irrigation period until you are confident water isn't draining past the roots. This will give you an indication of the **length** of the irrigation required. The **volume** of water applied can be determined by reading your meter at the beginning and end of a shift, or by multiplying the emitter discharge (L/hr) by the number of emitters in the block. The **timing** of application will be determined by how quickly the rootzone dries out.

Make a point of regularly checking any drains and sumps. Flowing drains indicate that excess water has been applied.

Prepared by Mary Retallack and Peter Scholefield
for The South Australian Wine Industry Association.

For any queries you have about this bulletin
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Grapevine Management Options in Times of Drought and Water Restrictions

Regulated Deficit Irrigation (RDI)

RDI is commonly applied to red varieties from fruit set until veraison to reduce berry size. This is not as relevant for whites but may be useful for reducing excess vegetative growth. A smaller vine requires less water, and savings during this period may be utilised later in the season.

The amount of water stress required to influence vine vigour and berry size will vary depending on several factors.

Do not implement an RDI strategy if you have shallow water tables, high soil salinity, a poor performing irrigation system, no soil water monitoring or poor vine health. RDI on vines already under reduced irrigation may reduce shoot growth to unacceptable levels and result in excessive fruit exposure and delayed ripening.

Hot weather can quickly move the vines from mild to high stress, particularly on sandy soils. As excessive water stress may cause severe crop loss, plans should be made to ensure that water can be applied to the RDI area relatively quickly if required.

See the reference list if you would like to know more about RDI.

WHEN IS STRESS MOST DAMAGING?

The amount of water required at different stages of vine growth will depend on the region and irrigation strategy employed. Throughout the season, monitoring of soil moisture levels is essential. It is easy to over-water, or apply too much stress.

Figure 1 provides a guide to the % water requirement of vines at key times during the growing season. Calculate the volume of water (from the percentage indicated or historical records) that you will require for these periods. This can be calculated for each month. Keep in mind that additional water may be required at the start of the season to fill the soil profile if Winter has been particularly dry.

Spring: Budburst to Fruit Set

Monitor soil moisture shortly before budburst. Do not assume that winter rainfall has been adequate, nor that irrigation is essential.

High water stress in this period, which includes the sensitive flowering process, can severely reduce **yield**. Up to 50% of fruit can be lost if berries drop ('shot berries') or do not develop properly ('hen and chicken').

Soil water should be maintained during flowering. Maintain level towards refill end of Readily Available Water (RAW). After fruit set the vine will be able to move quickly into deficit to limit vine vigour and/or berry size.

Spring: Fruit Set to Veraison

Moderate stress in this period can be beneficial, especially for red varieties. The application of Regulated Deficit Irrigation (RDI; see left) can result in water savings. This water can then be used later in the season.

Summer: Veraison to Harvest

- Fruit **quality** can be significantly affected during this time. If the vine does not have adequate healthy foliage the accumulation of berry sugar will be reduced.
- If stress has reduced vine vigour, this may affect the vines' ability to ripen fruit properly (affecting sugar accumulation, acid balance, flavour, aroma and colour).
- If basal leaves have dropped this may lead to over exposure of the fruit and sunburn (especially whites).
- If conditions have been particularly dry and a significant rain event is forecast after veraison, it is worth considering a small irrigation just prior to the rain (within 3 days) if you have water available. This may prevent the splitting of berries (and secondary fungal infection) by slowing the uptake of water by the vines.

Avoid severe moisture stress during ripening.

Autumn: Harvest to leaf fall: then dormancy to budburst

Post-harvest irrigation is important but should be limited. The aim is to avoid an unwanted flush of vegetative growth while ensuring that the vines' capacity to store carbohydrate is not affected.

Very dry conditions prior to budburst may result in restricted growth early in Spring and reduced bunch number and size.

Water stress should be avoided after harvest and prior to budburst. Normally Autumn and Winter rains will be sufficient, but soil moisture must be checked if rainfall is below average in this period.

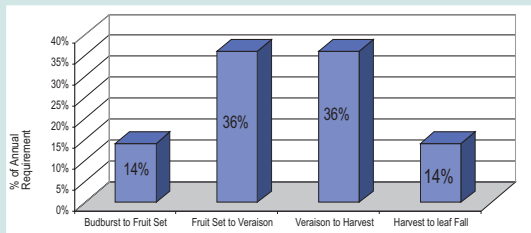


Figure 1: Approximate % of water required at key growth stages.

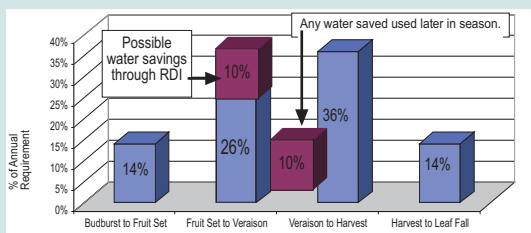


Figure 2: An example of how water saved through RDI could be used later.

MODIFIED FROM RURAL SOLUTIONS

Grapevine Management Options in Times of Drought and Water Restrictions

BEST WAYS TO USE LIMITED RESOURCES

Visual indicators of water stress in vines

The physiological reaction of a vine to water stress will affect the growth and development of the shoots, leaves and fruit, depending on the timing and level of stress during the season.

Degree of Stress	Vine Vigour	Vine Appearance
None	Vine healthy and shoot tips growing vigorously (early in season)	Shoot tip leaves light, bright green. Other leaves dull green. Tendrils not wilting at midday.
Slight	Slowing of vine vigour and shortening of inter node length.	Shoot tip leaves light, bright green. Other leaves dull green. Tendrils wilting at midday.
Moderate to High		Shoot growth stopped. All leaves (including shoot tip leaves) dull light green. Tendrils and shoot tips drooping.
High	Vine canopy growth ceased	Leaves folding, with backs to sun on hot days. Exposed basal leaves yellow. Shoot tips dead.
High to Very High		Leaves folded, light green with burnt margins, shoots drooping. Exposed basal leaves missing. Tendrils dead and some missing.

Table 2: Grape vine physiological responses to different degrees of water stress

MODIFIED FROM RURAL SOLUTIONS (2004)

- If an exposed vine leaf feels cool to touch when pressed quickly against the palm of the hand, the vine is transpiring water through the stomata. When vines are stressed, stomata partially or completely close, so transpiration of water ceases and the leaf feels warm.
- On a particularly hot day, the leaves may 'fold' to avoid the sun, and tendrils will appear to wilt.

- Berries may become less firm and start to shrivel.

Know your soil

The most important things to understand are the interaction of your soil with the applied water, the operation of your irrigation system to maintain soil moisture, and the responses of the vine to different watering schedules. Soil varies greatly within a region, and often also within a vineyard. Your vines are not in a uniform growing medium.

The important messages are:

- Find out as much about your soil as you can.
- Know the depth of the rootzone and how much water it can hold. Check RAW values from the soil survey.
- Where possible, keep similar soils in the same irrigation unit.
- Apply only enough water so that the part of a block that needs the least amount of water in the rootzone receives that amount. This will reduce waste and avoid drainage problems.
- Always check the soil water moisture information you are receiving with an in-field assessment.

Salinity

Soil salinity may rise in times of drought. This may be in part caused by the application of saline water (concentrated through evaporation), or less fresh water being available to 'shandy' saline water. If salinity becomes too high, defoliation of the vine may occur or salt may accumulate in the fruit, reducing quality.

Salinity will build up in the soil if not leached periodically. Take salinity readings throughout the season to determine if a volume of water is required to leach salt from the rootzone.

If salinity is a problem, and you have access to more than one water source (eg one of lower salinity than the other), use the saline water early in the season while it has the least salt. The better quality water should be used at the end of the season or each irrigation as a 'leaching fraction'.

Soil salinity can be measured by taking a representative soil sample (0-15 cm) from the rootzone, sub-sampling to produce 20 g of soil and mixing with 100 mL of distilled water. Shake the sample for 5 minutes and leave to settle out for 1 hour. Use a salinity meter to obtain a salinity reading in dS/m. Salinity (EC_{1:5}) should be maintained in the following ranges: sandy soils < 0.15; loam < 0.17; and clay < 0.4 dS/cm.

Your strategy for heat waves?

Allocate a certain percentage of your irrigation budget for extreme weather events. If you do not have sufficient water to safeguard vines against extreme hot periods, stress to the vines can be extreme.

- Vines planted on sandy soils will dry out quickly.
- Risk of crop loss is high. Vines may 'shut down', resulting in delayed or uneven ripening.
- Defoliation of the bunch zone and along the shoots can occur; this will result in over-exposed fruit and possible stewed or phenolic characters.
- To minimise water used during heatwaves, make sure vines have water before the hottest part of the day. Water at night or early in the morning.
- Be willing to sacrifice a small part of the block to get the majority through without creating excess vigour.
- Be prepared to act quickly. You may need to forego a post-harvest irrigation to save this season's crop. Note that this may affect the following growing season if Autumn rains do not eventuate.

Grapevine Management Options in Times of Drought and Water Restrictions

IF WATER IS SO SHORT THAT VINES ARE IN 'SURVIVAL' MODE...

As this has not been a common issue in the past, there is considerable uncertainty regarding the best strategies to keep vines alive and protect future production capacity with very limited water supplies. However, the following broad points apply if you have decided to abandon the crop in this season and keep the vines as healthy as possible for next year:

- The first priority is to retain bud fruitfulness, to maximise the potential for a crop in the next season.
- The second is to retain as much of the vine's carbohydrate store as possible, to assist the vine to recover when conditions improve.
- These two aims are achieved by maintaining a very small canopy of functioning leaves, and by removing all fruit.
- Winter pruning should aim to reduce the number of buds retained.
- Remove all bunches shortly after berry set. This can be done at 'pea size' with a machine harvester (with beaters at high speed), or by hand at flowering.
- Only apply early season irrigation if vines are showing extreme stress. Preferably, wait until shoot growth has ceased; probably around the time of flowering.
- Where possible, limit shoots to approx. 30–40 cm in length. Withholding irrigation will achieve this at many sites. Early summer hedging may also assist.
- Irrigation can then be cut to an absolute minimum. Aim to retain 6-8 healthy leaves per shoot.
- Massive leaf loss should be avoided, as it will lead to reduced carbohydrate availability and poor fruitfulness of basal buds.
- Careful observation of the condition of each block will replace detailed soil moisture monitoring – spend time in the vineyard and manage according to how different blocks are responding to soil conditions.
- Be aware that this strategy offers little buffer against extreme weather events. If possible, irrigate prior to any forecast very hot and dry days.

THINGS TO CONSIDER BEFORE NEXT SEASON

Look back on your past irrigation management and think about ways you can make small (or large) changes. Tough decisions may be necessary.

- Know the profitability of each of your blocks (yields, quality, variety etc). Then decide on which sections are more likely to do best with less water. Evaluate marginal cost of water against marginal economic loss.
- Have a plan for 'worst case' scenario. Which 50% of your vineyard will you water?
- Remove all weeds, cover crops etc unless absolutely essential, eg for drift control.
- Utilise mulch to maintain soil moisture for longer and reduce evaporation (caution: frost risk).
- Turn off water on windbreaks/blocks which are unviable.
- Are any blocks due for redevelopment? This is a good time to start removing the vines. Water savings can be used on other blocks.
- Prune to normal bud numbers in Winter and remove crop after set if the season stays dry. Reducing bud number too much will induce a vigour response.
- Reduce nitrogen application if vines are showing signs of high vigour. This will reduce vegetative growth and the amount of water required to sustain the canopy.
- If you have vines on rootstocks, use your more saline water on them. Own rooted vines have a lower resistance to salinity than do rootstocks such as Ramsey and Ruggeri.
- Watch water market. If sales are available, look at economics of top-up purchase as a form of insurance.

Keep accurate records for reference and fine tuning of irrigation. If water use is not measured it cannot be managed.

REFERENCES

General

www.fullstop.com.au

Rural Solutions (2004)

www.pir.sa.gov.au

Regulated Deficit Irrigation (RDI)

www.gwrdc.com.au

www.pir.sa.gov.au

www.crcv.com.au/viticare/vitinotes/

ROSEANNE HEALY ELECTED TO CHAIR

The Riverland Wine Industry Development Council is pleased to announce the appointment of Ms. Roseanne Healy, Chair of the Riverland Winegrape Growers' Association Inc. as the Council's new Chair.

Ms. Healy takes on the role with a wealth of business experience behind her with both a managerial and marketing focussed emphasis; Chief Executive of SA Great, and Managerial Consultant to Phillips Fox Solicitors and Adelaide Airport being some of her past positions.

Ms. Healy recognised that it is a challenging time to be taking on the role of Chair of the Council given "it is clearly a very difficult time for not only the Riverland wine industry, but the Australian wine industry that has found sales volumes plateau and financial returns decrease after two decades of near-exponential and prosperous growth."

Ms. Healy noted that "winegrape growers have had to endure several years of successively low prices, while wineries have been confronted with stockpiling wine for which there appears to be few profitable

markets. The downturn has had a significant impact on the wine industry but more severely on regional communities such as the Riverland. The drought has 'lifted the bar further' now, constraining the supply of wine."

The Riverland Wine Industry Development Council is working to help keep growers' costs down, maintain good quality levels, and promote market opportunities for the region's wines.

Despite the difficulties of the current conditions, Ms. Healy was optimistic for the longer term outlook of the industry as it continued to embrace 'world's best practices' in winegrape and winemaking technology, while looking more acutely at the tastes and purchasing trends of the Australian wine industry's customers – be they local, in established export markets, or emerging export markets.

Ms. Healy replaces Mr. Bill Moularadellis (Kingston Estate Wines) who was elected to the Office of Vice Chair. Mr. John Angove (Angove's Pty Ltd) was elected as the Treasurer.



Roseanne Healy



Photography by Milton Wordley.

SAWIA BRANDING

Thank you to those who recently provided assistance, time and your smiling faces for the South Australian Wine Industry Association regional branding photo shoot with Mr Milton Wordley.

After travelling the length of the Murray River from Paringa to Blanchetown the ideal location was found, 'the shot' captured the beauty and essence of the Riverland wine region. With large blue skies, our majestic river with a vineyard nestled in soils on the top of ancient cliffs, such a unique setting is worthy of the being the hero shot for the Riverland wine region.

Supporting the hero image are a set of images taken over the course of the two visits to the Riverland by Mr Wordley capturing the diversity of the regions horticulture, the generous nature of our people, and the uniqueness of our expansive vineyards.

With the photo shoot complete the imagery is now being used to progress the SAWIA regional branding project and create the family of South Australian wine region banners for trade shows and promotions in emerging wine export markets. Phrases that depict the essence of individual region will be scripted at the bottom of each banner while the regions name will become a heading at the top of the banner.

SAWIA have indicated that the project is close to completion and will promote South Australian wine as having distinct regional character and sense of place.

SOME LIKE IT HOT 2006 TASTING



Some Like It Hot 2006 tasting.



Peter Forrestal.

Mediterranean varietals from Greece and Italy captured the taste buds of Riverland winemakers at the Some Like It Hot Tasting with renowned Australian wine show judge Mr Peter Forrestal last December.

With a keen passion for Greek varietals Assyrtiko and Agiorgitiko and Italian varietals Fiano and Sagrantino Mr Forrestal lead the winemakers through a tutored tasting of the wine varietals and their distinctive styles.

These Mediterranean varietals were selected due to likely suitability to the warm growing conditions of the Riverland wine region and the ability of the region to produce fruit forward wine styles.

Mr Forrestal tutored four tasting brackets of up to six wines in each bracket taking winemakers on a journey not only of the wine varietals but also the wine country of origin.

Riverland Winemakers commented that the tasting as a valuable date on the winemaking calendar and flagged the Italian Sagrantino as the stand out varietal of the day;

...*"Sagrantino ...the star variety, the older Italian wines showed intensity, length, savoury tannins and had that "drink more of me" quality. The variety definitely needs time to mellow the tannins."*

...*"The highlight of the tasting for me was the Sagrantino wines which I felt were stunning. The tasting has become an opportunity for the winemaking community to get together and examine wines we would not usually taste under the guidance of those who can illuminate their singular attractions. Often wines like these would be dismissed as uncommercial or too difficult for our customers, yet with enlightened coaching we can be lead past our immediate unfamiliarity with these styles. I look forward to the next."*

The Some Like it Hot Tasting is an annual event and will be held this year on Tuesday October 16th 2007. Programs will be available later in the year on the Riverland Wine website www.riverlandwine.org.au

CELLAR DOOR METRICS PROGRAM

Are you achieving sales results inline with regional, state and national trends?

Would you like to know how much your cellar door visitors are spending and on what?

The Winemakers' Federation of Australia has recently launched the Cellar Door Metrics program, a unique tool for all Australian cellar doors. The Cellar Door Metrics program is a national database and collection system that has the capacity to benchmark cellar door and wine tourism information.

Cellar Doors register and enter data weekly and while information is secure and confidential the aggregated data from the program could be used by Cellar Doors to benchmark performance and create strategies to achieve growth in sales and visitation to the cellar door. The data will assist the industry in placing an economic value on the cellar door operations.

If a high percentage of Riverland Cellar Doors register into the national program resulting in strong regional aggregated data the Riverland Wine Industry Development Council believes there is potential to collectively use the data to develop regional strategies to grow the regions emerging wine tourism.

The program is heavily subsidised through partnerships with state tourism bodies and the Wine Makers Federation resulting in individual Cellar Doors contribution being \$150 for 2007, and a commitment to entering weekly information online.

Please take a moment to visit the Cellar Door Metrics website, www.cellardoormetrics.com.au, which provides an overview in the 'User Guide' of the simple processes for secure data collection and results.

For further information please contact Ms Robin Shaw, Tourism Development Director, Winemakers Federation of Australia, Ph 08 8222 9255 or Ms Sandy Iosefellis, Marketing and Promotions Officer, RWIDC Ph 08 8582 2952.



Berri Estates Cellar Door

CLIMATE CHANGE MODELLING PLANNED FOR RIVERLAND WINEGRAPES

The Riverland and the Clare Valley will be the pilot regions for a project assessing the possible effects of climate change on the winegrape industries.

The project is a co-operative venture between SARDI and the South Australian Wine Industry Association, but these bodies will work closely in our region with the Riverland Viticultural Technical Group to fine-tune its unfolding.

While the project leaders are not necessarily suggesting that 'global warming' is a certainty, they are keen to ensure that the industry include the possibility of accelerated climate change in its planning processes.

While the effect of climate change on viticulture is uncertain, there is growing acknowledgement that average temperatures are increasing, and we can expect that rainfall patterns may also be affected in the long term. The project aims to help us secure good quality information about what the future may hold, to allow us to 'adapt' our practices, as well as adopting 'mitigation' measures to try and slow down the rate of change.

Vineyards are a long term asset with a productive life of at least 30 years. Traditionally we have made our decisions on which land to use, which variety to plant, and which management practices to apply on the understanding that while much will change in that time that the climate is pretty much constant. With evidence of accelerated climate change mounting, it appears that a reasonably steady and predictable climate is unlikely to continue to be the case.



Questions therefore are being put as to what might be the characteristics of the Riverland's climate in the coming decades and where's the best information available for us to get a good understanding of this. Once the information is collected and collated, determining how it should be managed and used to provide meaningful decisions is a further crucial step.

The climate change project will develop a framework and kit that will assist the Riverland and other winegrape growing regions in seeking an answer to these issues.

As one of the pilot regions, the project team will work with Riverland growers in order to develop workable processes in order to create and test a system that will in turn 'paint a picture' of how climate change may impact on our region's planning.

This project is still very much at its embryonic stage, and the RWIDC looks forward to keeping Riverland winegrape growers and winemakers informed of its progress.

AUSTRALIAN INDUSTRY PROTECTED AGAINST SUBSIDISED FRENCH BRANDY

The decision to apply countervailing duties to imported French brandy under government anti-dumping laws has been welcomed by industry groups including the Winemakers' Federation of Australia, which made representations to the government on providing a fairer domestic marketplace for Australian producers of brandy who were suffering as a result of subsidised imports from France.

"The Australian wine and brandy industry has long been committed to a fair playing field in international trade, free of market distorting subsidies and tariffs," said Mr Stephen Strachan, Chief Executive of the Winemakers' Federation of Australia. "Unfortunately not all our competitors share that commitment, which means that anti-dumping duties become necessary."

A detailed review undertaken by the Australian Customs Service found that brandy produced in France and exported to Australia is subsidised and, as a result, the Australian brandy industry has suffered from losses in market share, sales volumes, revenues and profits.

Having determined that imported French brandy distilled wholly from grape wine (excluding Cognac and Armagnac) was likely to continue to be subsidised, the review recommended that the Minister approve a countervailing duty to the value of the subsidy, which was determined to be €2.028 per litre of absolute alcohol.

Chairman of the WFA Brandy Producers Working Group, John Angove of the

Riverland's Angove's Wines, said this measure would help to provide fair competition in the market place.

"Australia has a proud history of producing high quality brandy that is enjoyed by many loyal consumers. However, our French competitors have long benefited from substantial and ongoing government subsidies that allow them to undercut prices and steal market share," Mr Angove said.

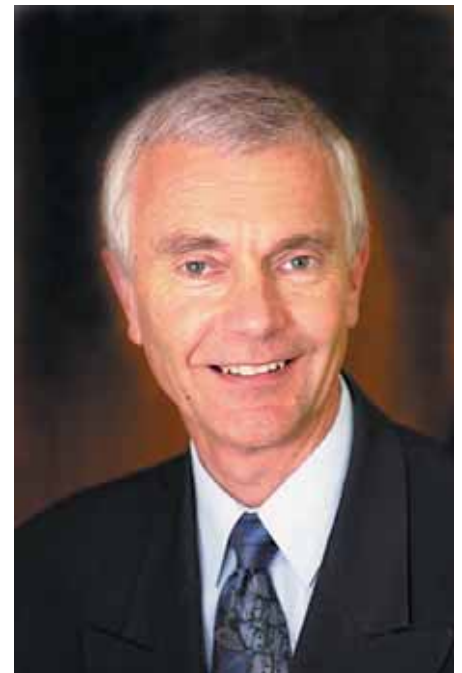
"Local brandy producers were disappointed when duties against subsidised imports were lifted over the last two years and are pleased the Minister has now recognised the damage being caused to our local industry and acted to reintroduce duties."

Estimates based on Australian Bureau of Statistics data show that during 2006 approximately 2.59m litres of brandy were sold in Australia, of which 1.35m litres were locally produced and 1.24m litres were imported.

In its investigations, the Australian Customs Service found that stemming from the continuing subsidisation of French brandy, the Australian brandy industry has experienced injury in the form of;

- price suppression on brandy in bottles;
- loss of market share;
- loss of sales volume and capacity utilisation;
- loss of revenue;
- loss of profit; and
- reduction in profitability.

The Minister for Justice and Customs accepted Customs' recommendations in relation to the subsidisation of brandy distilled wholly from grape wine (excluding Cognac and Armagnac) exported from France to Australia and implemented the countervailing duty to offset the subsidy.



John Angove

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