

Iowa's Grape and Wine Industry: Vibrant, Productive, and Growing

Thank you and good afternoon to you all. We've already heard comments today about the fascinating field of viticulture and all the intricate work that goes into making a fine glass of wine. This morning we heard from some of the brightest scientists in the field as they discussed the wide array of efforts associated with viticulture; from grape cultivar research to weed management, from crop rotation to soil quality studies. You also heard about the villains of viticulture, threats to the crop like grape insects, herbicide drift, and the range of plant diseases that endanger the grape harvest. I know when I have my next glass of wine I'll have a lot more appreciation for how it got from the earth into my glass.

We also have a lot of appreciation for the people who helped make Iowa's Grape and Wine industry into what it is today: vibrant, productive, and, of course, growing. The research done by Drs. Paul Domoto and Gail Nonnecke couldn't have been as successful without the assistance of the Iowa Grape and Wine Development Commission and the Iowa Department of Land Stewardship. Special thanks to commission Chairman Ben Jung of Ingersoll Wine and Spirits. The Commission also provides funds to support Mike White's appointment as a Viticulturist Field Specialist for Extension. Of course, we'd like to acknowledge Iowa Secretary of Agriculture Bill Northey for his leadership and hard work for supporting and promoting agriculture in this state.

The people involved with the Horticulture Research Station as part of the Research and Demonstration Farms program also have been a big help in augmenting Iowa's viticulture activities. Special thanks are due to Horticulture Research Station Superintendent Nick Howell and Research and Demonstration Farms Manager Mark Honeyman.

With us today are vendors representing a number of companies. We'd like to acknowledge their help and thank them for their participation here today at the ISU Horticulture Research Station.

So what have all these people mentioned here today accomplished through their efforts over the last few years? Well, as of July 3rd, we have 66 entities holding an Iowa Native Winery license in the state, more than five times the amount we had this time in 2001. The Iowa Wine and Beer Promotion website shows 54 of these wineries open for business right now. All told, we are currently aware of 371 commercial vineyards in Iowa covering approximately 850 acres. Annual wine production has increased from 51,500 gallons in June 2002 to 246,733 gallons in December 2006. All of this amounts to a higher awareness of and appreciation for local wines grown

right here in our own state. Iowans from the Missouri to the Mississippi are discovering the native reds and whites on the shelves of their *local* grocery stores and wineries. It all reminds me of a quip from Thomas Jefferson, who said "By making this wine vine known to the public, I have rendered my country as great a service as if I had enabled it to pay back the national debt." By the efforts of the people involved with Iowa's viticulture industry, our public has been done a great service, and the lives of our residents have been made a little sweeter, or a little dryer (depending on your palate).

And their lives will continue to improve as the viticulture industry thrives and grows in the future. The Midwest Grape and Wine Industry Institute's funding for this year and the next comes from some very important partners that I'd like to thank now:

- Iowa Grape and Wine Development Commission via Iowa Department of Land Stewardship (IDALS)
- Iowa Department of Economic Development passed through to the Iowa Wine Growers Association to the Institute (one time funding @ \$15,000)
- Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture at Iowa State University
- USDA Risk Management Agency (one time funding @ \$16,430)

Again, thank you to all who have made Iowa's viticulture industry a huge success and thank you to all of you who have shared your expertise and insight today. I look forward to the experts in the afternoon sessions yet to come and to the continued successes of the industry in the future. Thank you very much and enjoy your meals.