

**101 Iowa Grape & Wine Industry Facts**

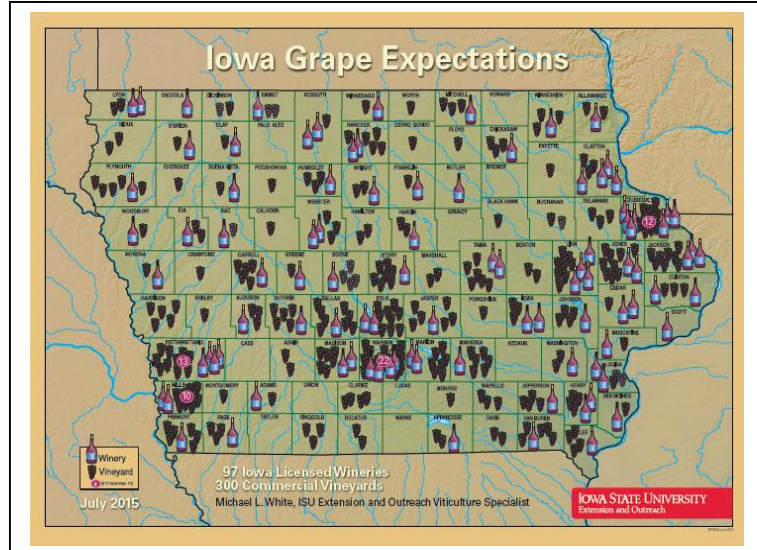
8-12-15

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1. There were 97 wineries and 300 commercial vineyards covering 1,250+ acres in Iowa in July of 2015.
2. Iowa ranked eleventh in grape production in the United States in 1899, and sixth in 1919. (a)
3. The Federal Government does not subsidize grape growing or winemaking. (b)
4. Iowa had approximately 30 acres of grapes in production in 2000. (a)
5. Iowa has the nation's third highest excise wine tax of \$1.75 per gallon on all wholesale sales of wine. (c)
6. European homesteaders in Iowa established small vineyards on their farms to supply fresh grapes and to make juice, wine, and jams for their families. (a)
7. Grapes were grown in the Council Bluffs area as early as 1857, when A.S. Bonham planted a vineyard on a hill overlooking the city. (a)
8. According to the 1860 U.S. Agricultural Census, Des Moines, Iowa, Mills, Muscatine, and Van Buren counties led Iowa in production of farm-processed wine.
9. The 1900 U.S. Agricultural Census showed that Iowa produced 7,403,900 pounds of grapes and 76,301 gallons of farm-processed wine.
10. Late 1800's Amana wines were made on a communal basis, and each family maintained designated rows of grapes. Amana wine was made and distributed by "punchable" tickets – 20 gallons per year for men, 12 gallons per year for women. (a)
11. Prior to the year 2,000, Concord grapes were the #1 cultivar of grapes grown in Iowa. (a)
12. The three primary reasons Iowa's grape industry disappeared in the mid-1900's was due to:

- a. The use of highly volatile 2,4-D herbicide on corn and pastures starting in the mid-1940's
  - b. The [Armistice Blizzard](#) on November 11, 1940
  - c. Iowa's crop's base moving to more row crop production primarily due to USDA farm subsidy programs.
13. Linn, Pottawattamie, and Polk counties produced approximately one-third of Iowa's grapes in 1919, with Pottawattamie and Polk producing 1,863,000 and 1,374,000 pounds, respectively. (a)
  14. The Council Bluffs Grape Growers Association was organized in 1893 by 21 of the higher-volume growers in the area. (a)
  15. The [Iowa Alcohol Beverage Division](#) is the Iowa government agency that administers the state regulations over alcohol sales in Iowa.
  16. The [Federal Tax & Trade Bureau](#) is government agency that handles federal alcohol regulations in the U.S.
  17. The [Midwest Grape & Wine Industry Institute](#) at Iowa State University was formed in September of 2006 to provide education, research and marketing assistance to the Iowa and the Midwest grape and wine industry.
  18. The first Iowa wine festival was held in Indianola, Iowa on 9-24-05. Approximately 1,000 people attended this first wine festival event.
  19. The second Iowa wine festival held in Clear Lake, Iowa on 10-1-05. Approx. 500 people attended that event.
  20. As of July, 2015 there were seven official wine trails in Iowa:
    - Amana Colonies Wine Trail: <http://amanacolonies.com/>
    - Iowa Wine Trail: <http://iowawinetrail.com/>
    - Western Iowa Wine Trail: <http://westerniowawinetrail.com/>
    - Heart of Iowa Wine Trail: <http://www.heartofiowawinetrail.com/>
    - Scenic Iowa Wine Trail: <http://www.scenicriverswine.com/>
    - I-80 Wine Trail: <http://i80winetrail.com/>
    - Northwest Prairie Wine Trail: <http://www.northwestprairiewinetrail.com/>
  21. The [Iowa Wine Growers Association](#) was formed in January of 2000 and officially filed as a 504 nonprofit corporation with the State of Iowa on 8-21-2000. The original name was the "Iowa Grape Growers Association" and was formed to represent commercial winegrape growers and wineries throughout Iowa.
  22. There are four grape & wine grower organizations in Iowa:
    - [Iowa Wine Growers Association](#)
    - [Scenic River Grape Growers Association](#)
    - [Western Iowa Wine Growers Association](#)
    - [Mississippi Valley Grape Growers Association](#)
  23. Wild Grapes in Iowa are either male or female. The male plants do not bear grapes.

24. Grape vines are pruned in late winter or early spring. Approximately 90% of last year's growth is pruned off the vine each year at this time.
25. Iowa passed a strong statewide prohibition law in 1916 four years before the United States Congress passed the 18th Amendment outlawing alcohol in 1919.
26. The Federal 21st Amendment—which repealed the 18th Amendment (Prohibition) — passed quickly and easily in 1933.
27. Iowa wineries are allowed to wholesale self-distribute their wines to other retail outlets for resale. Many states do not allow this.
28. Iowa Wineries are allowed to purchase beer wholesale for retail sale in their wineries.
29. There are 40+ different grape cultivars being grown in Iowa to produce Iowa wines.
30. The typical grape harvest season runs from early August through mid-October in Iowa.
31. Grape yields can run from 3-8 tons per acre in Iowa with the average yield typically in the 3-4 tons/acre range.
32. Wineries typically purchase grapes from other growers at approximately \$1,000 - \$1,400 per ton delivered to the winery.
33. One ton of grapes will typically yield 140 to 160 gallons of juice.
34. The hot and humid growing conditions of Iowa require growers to spray fungicides on their grapes to control fungal diseases.
35. The Iowa Wine & Beer Promotion Board was formed within the [Iowa Department of Economic Development](#) in 1985. This board is funded from Iowa wine and beer taxes. A listing and location of all the wineries and breweries can be found here:  
<http://www.traveliowa.com/GetInspired/WineAndBeer>
36. [Ackerman Winery](#) in the Amana Colonies has won the most National and International wine awards of any winery in Iowa.
37. It is very common for Iowa wines to win bronze, silver and gold medals in National and International wine competitions.
38. There are three retail grape juice processors in Iowa:
  - a. [Iowa Grape Vines](#) in Maquoketa
  - b. [John 15 Vineyard](#) in Scanton
  - c. [Moon Valley Vineyards](#) in Oskaloosa
39. Iowa grape vines are typically planted in 10 ft. wide rows with the grape plants spaced 8 ft. apart in the row. Approximately 545 vines per acre.
40. Grape vines are very sensitive to 2,4-D and dicamba (phenoxy type) herbicides used to kill broadleaves in lawns, crops, pastures and roadside ditches.

41. Iowa Mead is a wine made from Iowa honey.
42. Iowa State University (then Iowa State College) started cultivar trials and other experiments on grapes and other fruits at the Council Bluffs Experimental Fruit Farm near Council Bluffs in 1947. Eighty-four cultivars of grapes were planted from 1947 through 1965, with 52 under evaluation before the experimental site closed in 1965. (a)
43. Iowa State University planted winegrape research vineyards in 2003 at ISU research farms in Ames, Crawfordsville, Lewis and Nashua. Only the Ames research vineyard exists today. The other three research vineyards were taken out due to budget limitations in 2011.
44. After World War II, most of Iowa's commercial vineyards were located in southwest Iowa in Harrison, Mills, and Pottawattamie counties. In 1948 Pottawattamie County produced 2 million pounds of grapes on 3,200 acres. (a)
45. In 1964 a regional ban was imposed on volatile, drift-prone 2,4-D herbicide formulations in the five counties where most of Iowa's grapes were being grown (Muscatine, Lee, Harrison, Mills, and Pottawattamie). (a)
46. In 1966 the Pottawattamie County grape harvest was down to 129,000 pounds on less than 700 acres and total grape production for Iowa decreased to 480,000 pounds. (a)
47. Grape vines planted in Iowa need very little if any fertilizer due to Iowa's very fertile soils.
48. The [Mid-America Wine Competition](#) was started in in 2007 and is held at [Des Moines Area Community College \(DMACC\)](#) in Ankeny, IA. The competition is open only to commercial wineries of Arkansas, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Tennessee, and Wisconsin.
49. An Iowa "Wine" means any beverage containing 5-17% alcohol by weight or a maximum of 21.25% alcohol by volume. (c)
50. A class "A" wine permit purchased for \$25 per year through the Iowa Beverage Division (Iowa ABD) is the state license required to have a native Iowa winery. (c)
51. [Iowa Wine Tours](#) in Dubuque was established in the spring of 2006 to give winery tours in the Upper Mississippi Valley winery area of Iowa, Illinois, Minnesota and Wisconsin.
52. As of June 2012, there were 26 different wholesale wine distributors operating in Iowa. (c)
53. A class "B" Iowa wine permit allows wineries to sell retail at off-premise locations like farmers markets and special events.
54. A class "C" Iowa wine permit allows wineries to sell by the glass at wine festivals.
55. The [Upper Mississippi River Valley Viticultural Area](#) was approved by the [Federal Alcohol, Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau](#) in 2009.

56. The [Upper Mississippi River Valley Viticultural Area](#) is the largest American Viticultural Area (AVA) in the U.S. covering 29,914 square miles in Northeast Iowa, Southwest Minnesota, Northwest Illinois and Southwest Wisconsin.
57. [Santa Maria Winery](#) in Carroll is the only winery in Iowa producing “Valid Alter Wines” approved for use by the Roman Catholic Church. You can learn more about what a Valid Alter Wine here: <http://www.validaltarwine.com/>
58. It takes approximately 150 - 200 hours of vineyard labor per acre per year to produce a crop of winegrapes in Iowa.
59. Iowa grape growers often cover their vineyard rows with netting around harvest time to keep birds from eating all of their grapes.
60. Terroir (*ter-wah*) is a French term that describes the special characteristics that the geography, soils and climate bestow on the wine. Iowa has over 400 types of soils and many different types of geography and climate that can affect the terroir or the wines.
61. [Kirkwood Community College](#) in Cedar Rapids, Iowa offers Viticulture (grape) and Enology (wine making) classes and has a commercial winery on campus.
62. [Des Moines Area Community College \(DMACC\)](#) offers degrees in Viticulture (grapes).
63. Many Iowan’s take Online Viticulture (grapes) and Enology (wine making) classes through the [Viticulture Enology Science Technology Alliance \(VESTA\)](#) centered out of [Missouri State University](#). Iowa students can pay in-state tuition by enrolling through [Northeast Iowa Community College](#).
64. Fort Dodge, Iowa is the home of “[The Grapevine Magazine](#)” a national grape and wine industry magazine.
65. As of July of 2015 there were eight mechanical vineyard harvesters in Iowa.
66. In 2010 Iowa was nationally ranked #23 in wine production and #15 in number of wineries. (d)
67. [MKF](#), an independent economic research company reported that the total economic impact of the Iowa vineyard and winery industry in 2012 to be \$430 million. (e)
68. [MKF](#), an independent economic research company in California reported that for each \$1 spent on a native Iowa wine created a \$28 economic impact in 2012. (e)
69. Total Iowa wine production for the calendar year ending 6-30-15 was 338,125 gallons (f)
70. 55.7% of Iowa produced wine is sold wholesale for resale.(f)
71. Iowans purchased an estimated 4,467,564 gallons of wine from wholesale and 267,868 gallons from native Iowa wineries for the year ending June 2015 or 5.8 percent of the total wine sold in Iowa. (f)
73. Veraison is the term denoting the onset of grape ripening. It is when the grapes begin to change

color. Veraison normally occurs during late July to early August in Iowa.

74. [DRS Manufacturing](#) in Jefferson, Iowa produces vineyard netting applicator equipment and vineyard sprayers that are sold throughout the U.S.
75. It takes approximately 500 grapes to produce a standard 750 ml bottle of Iowa wine.
76. A typical winery in Iowa will have a selection of 8-12+ different wines to choose from.
77. [Dr. Jacek Koziel](#), an Iowa State University agriculture research engineer uses the same gas analyzing equipment he uses to measure manure gases to also measure aromatic gases of grapes while they ripen.
78. The [North Iowa Wine Club](#), Iowa's oldest amateur winemaking club was formed in 1967. (g)
79. [The Eastern Iowa Wine Club](#), Iowa's largest amateur winemaking club was formed in November of 2007. (h)
80. The Schleswig Amateur Wine and Bier Club of Crawford County, Iowa held its 39<sup>th</sup> annual Wine and Bier contest in October of 2014 in Ida Grove, Iowa.
81. White Elk Vineyards was composed of around 100 acres of grapes with a winery and underground cellars. It was established in 1869 by Hiram Barney from New York. The vineyards and winery were located 2 miles north of Keokuk, IA on the west side of the river on a bluff overlooking the river. There were 4 underground domed limestone cellars 18' x 200' long and a fermenting room also underground. The cellars could hold over 100,000 gallons of wine. They produced wine from Catawba, Concord, Ives, Norton, Delaware, Clinton, Iona and Alvey grapes. The wine was sold all over the U.S. and Europe. (i)
82. The [Iowa State Horticultural Society](#) reported in 1868 on the results of grape growing and winemaking in sixteen different counties with all the established varieties of native hybrids. The testimony was all optimistic, and one witness declared that "one man can tend three acres of grapes as easily as twenty acres of corn. (j)
83. In 1881 Armand Dehay led a group of [French Icarians](#) who had established a colony in Corning, Iowa to 885 acres of land along the Russian River in Sonoma County, California. Approximately 3 miles south of Cloverdale. They quickly established a 45 acre Zinfandel vineyard. By 1887 the Icarian group dissolved and Armand Dehay stayed to establish the Icarian Winery. (k)
84. The first planter of record of Oregon grape vines was the pioneer nurseryman Seth Lewelling, of Milwaukie, Oregon who came from Iowa. The first grape variety that he planted in Oregon in 1847, was Isabella. (l)
85. The [Amana Colonies](#) "*German Community of True Inspiration*" were formed in 1854. On 25,000 acres of splendid Iowa soil The Inspirationists developed a prosperous economy based on farming, cabinetmaking, meat smoking, and **winemaking**. They used the basement of their meeting house (they did not use the term "church") as their wine cellar. (m)
86. Unlike our American and hybrid winegrape cultivars (American x French), pure French (*vinifera sp.*) grapevines cannot tolerate our cold winters and must be taken off their trellis and



buried under the soil each winter to survive.

87. The [Iowa Wine Growers Association](#) established the Iowa Quality Wine Consortium (IQWC) in January of 2012. Wines with the IQWC or IQ seal have passed a rigorous chemical and sensory panel test. IQWC wines are produced from a minimum of 75% Iowa grown fruit. The IQ wines are produced from less than 75% IA grown grapes, other fruits and/or other wine making material (n)
88. The majority of Iowa's winegrape cultivars are either native American (*labrusca sp.*) or hybrids from crosses made with French (*vinifera sp.*). These Cold Climate cultivars exhibit the needed cold and disease tolerance required to survive Iowa's climate.
89. A "FREE" downloadable iPhone or Android smartphone application showing where all the wineries, wine trails and breweries are in the state can be found on the Iowa Wine & Beer Promotion Board website: <http://www.iowawineandbeer.com/>
90. Hardcopies of the 45 page directory of Iowa's wineries, wine trails and breweries can be ordered for free on the Iowa Wine and Beer Promotion Board website: <http://www.iowawineandbeer.com/>
91. A long list of recipes using Iowa wines have been provided by the Iowa wineries and put on the Iowa Wine & Beer Promotion website: <http://www.traveliowa.com/GetInspired/WineAndBeer>
92. A calendar of winery events can be accessed on the Iowa Wine & Beer Promotion Board site: <http://www.traveliowa.com/GetInspired/WineAndBeer>
93. Some of the most common white winegrape varieties planted in Iowa would include: Brianna, Edelweiss, Esprit, LaCrosse, LaCrescent Frontenac Gris, Seyval, St. Popen and Vignoles.
94. Some of the most common red winegrape varieties planted in Iowa would include: Chancellor, Corot noir, Frontenac, Leon Millot, Marechal Foch, Marquette, Noriet, Norton Cynthiana, Petite Pearl, Sabrevois and St. Croix.
95. The Marechal Foch grape was named after French Marshal Ferdinand Foch (1851-1929) who served as Allied Supreme Commander of the British, French and American armies in France during World War I. Foch isn't known for any direct involvement in wine, but in a burst of patriotic fervor after the war, the French grape scientists who bred the new variety, named it after the aging general. (o)
96. "Iowa" labeled wines require a minimum of 75% of the fruit to be grown in Iowa.
97. "Cold Climate Viticulture" is the term use to describe winegrape growing in the Upper Midwest.
98. It typically takes 75 to 100 hours of labor per acre to hand harvest a full crop of Iowa winegrapes.
99. The "[Wine Experience](#)" is a family oriented "FREE" wine and grape exhibit located in Grandfathers' Barn on top of the Hill at the Iowa State Fair. Vineyard machinery exhibits, amateur & commercial wine exhibits, example vineyard, competitive grape stomping, educational exhibits, wine tasting and an area set aside for kid activities can all be found there.
100. Iowa's estimated June 2015 population was 3,116,403 and consumes about 1.52 gallons of

wine per person. The US average is 2.82 gallons of wine per person as of December 2013. (f)

101. The [Iowa State Fair](#) has both an Amateur and Commercial wine making competition each year. These competitions are open to only Iowa wineries and amateur winemakers.

### **References:**

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- o. ISU Extension Online – *A Review of Cold Climate Grape Cultivars* by Lisa Smiley: <http://viticulture.hort.iastate.edu/cultivars/Marechal%20Foch.pdf>

**Note:** Non-referenced items are from Michael White's working knowledge of the Iowa grape and wine industry.

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