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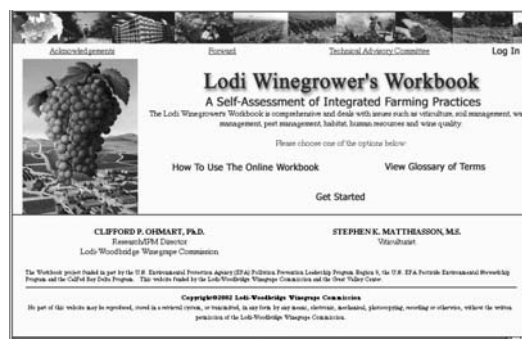
ANNOUNCING THE ONLINE VERSION OF THE *Lodi Winegrower's Workbook* BY CLIFF OHMART ¹

I am very pleased to announce that the *Lodi Winegrower's Workbook* is now available on the Internet. Not only is the entire workbook accessible, including all of the educational information and photos, but LWWC growers can now do their vineyard evaluations and develop action plans 'online' any time if they wish to do so. I would like to discuss some of the reasons why someone might want to use the online version of the workbook rather than the printed version, and how to access the workbook on the Internet, but first I need to explain the reasons for having the *Lodi Winegrower's Workbook* available even though we are now using the statewide Code of Sustainable Winegrowing Practices Workbook in our Lodi workbook workshops.

As many of you know, LWWC played a major role in the development of the Wine Institute/California Association of Winegrape Grower Sustainable Winegrowing Practices Program (SWP) ² and the development of the SWP self-assessment workbook. Moreover, the SWP program chose to model their workbook after the *Lodi Winegrower's Workbook* and much of the content of the vineyard chapters of the SWP workbook was adapted from LWWC's workbook. The SWP workbook also contains self-assessment chapters on sustainable practices inside the winery. During the development of the vineyard chapters in the SWP workbook the program team had grower groups in each California winegrowing region review LWWC's workbook and make suggestions as to how it could be adapted to their local conditions. I was responsible for writing the vineyard chapters of the SWP workbook and the final version is a product of modifying the LWWC workbook based on these excellent suggestions. The SWP workbook was released on October 29 and since then workbook workshops for growers and others for

winners have been held in every major wine region in the state, including Lodi, where we have so far held 9 workshops. The SWP workbook is free to all LWWC growers who attend a workbook workshop. In three short months over 260 California winegrape growers, farming over 100,000 acres of winegrapes, have evaluated one or more of their vineyards using the SWP workbook. Thirty wineries, producing over 11 million cases of wine, have evaluated their wineries using the SWP workbook. It is a very exciting program that truly distinguishes the California wine industry in the global marketplace. Because LWWC is a major player in the California wine industry and because of how the SWP workbook was created, it makes sense that we use it here in Lodi.

Now back to the online version of the *Lodi Winegrower's Workbook* and why someone would want to use it given that the SWP workbook is now being used in Lodi. First and foremost, the main reason for using either workbook is for education and self-improvement. The 'score' resulting from the vineyard evaluation is not the goal. The score is simply a quick way for a grower to see where they are doing well and where they need to improve on specific vineyard practices. The score also allows a grower to track their improvements over time. The real value in the workbook is the process of doing the vineyard evaluation; reading the worksheets, seeing where you are on the continuum of sustainable practices, and using the educational information to create action plans to work on specific vineyard practices. The content of the *Lodi Winegrower's Workbook* and the SWP workbook are at least 90% the same and since the value of each is in the process of filling them out, then using either workbook accomplishes this goal. We are committed to using the SWP workbook but it is going to be quite a while before there is an



An online workbook offers some unique advantages and when the opportunity arose to put it online...we took advantage of it

¹ Research/IPM Director for the LWWC

² For more information on the SWP check Wine Institute's website at www.wineinstitute.org

online version of this workbook. An online workbook offers some unique advantages and when the opportunity arose to put the *Lodi Winegrower's Workbook* online and we took advantage of it.

The online version of the *Lodi Winegrower's Workbook* allows the user to:

- View the entire workbook online with the ability to easily move from one section to another
- Create their own vineyard evaluations and action plans that are *password protected so that no one else has access to them*
- Stop a vineyard evaluation at any point in the workbook and return to that point at a later time
- Create an action plan for any issue in the workbook
- Evaluate and create action plans for many vineyards as many times as desired, with each evaluation and action plans stored permanently for later viewing
- View average scores for each issue in the workbook based on over 200 vineyard evaluations done in Lodi over the last 2 years, *all completely anonymous and completely confidential*

The online version is now available to all LWWC growers. Go to the LWWC website, click on the 'Sustainable Viticulture' menu selection on the left side of the screen then select 'Lodi Winegrower's Workbook'. You will see a 'link' to the on-line workbook at the top of the opening web page that describes the workbook. Another way to reach the online workbook is to go directly to www.lodiworkbook.com. Anyone visiting the workbook website can view the entire workbook as a read-only version. However, to fill out the workbook online and to see the summaries of the pooled vineyard evaluations, you will need to contact me and I will assign you a password that allows you to create your own workbook 'account' that only you have access to. Only LWWC growers will be given password accounts because we do not want vineyard evaluations from other regions being entered into the workbook database.

Chris Storm and I will be hosting workshops at the LWWC office for anyone who would like to have a tutorial on how to use the o-line workbook. Please call us at 367-4727 to arrange for one of these tutorials.

Chris Storm NEW VITICULTURIST AT THE LWWC

In the last newsletter it was announced that LWWC had just recruited Chris Storm as the new Viticulturist. He started work on January 2nd and now that he is on the job and is out meeting LWWC members it seems appropriate to describe a bit about him so everyone can get to know him better.

Chris grew up in Salinas on a row-crop and cattle ranch. His father is the planting and harvesting coordinator for Duda of California. Chris did many summer and winter jobs on production farms doing various things, including operating farm equipment. He attended the University of Puget Sound in Tacoma, WA, where he majored in biology. After a couple of years there he realized he really liked biology but wanted to attend a larger University. His brother was attending Chico State University at the time, so he transferred there to finish his biology degree. At Chico he took a general entomology class and really liked it and it inspired him to take an economic entomology class next. He realized this was a good specialization. Chris also became involved in a restoration project



along Big Chico Creek where he supervised high-school students participating in an Upward Bound program. He also helped a professor with a project that involved working with steelhead trout and salmon in tributaries of the Sacramento River.

As graduation neared Chris realized he wanted further schooling and got a great offer to go to Washington State University to begin a Master's Degree program in economic entomology. He studied with Dr. David James who specializes in Integrated Pest Management of winegrapes and hops. He became very interested in winegrapes, taking classes such as basic and advanced viticulture. His thesis topic was developing an IPM program for grape leafhopper, focusing on the role of *Anagrus* parasites in controlling grape leafhopper populations in Washington vineyards. Chris showed great promise as a researcher and some of his advisors at WSU encouraged him to consider doing a PhD. However, he felt a genuine desire to work with growers on real-life management problems. He also felt it was time to

head back to California and look for a job in the wine industry there. As he neared the completion of his Master's Degree at WSU he began looking for jobs in California and came across our opening at LWWC, applied and was by far the best applicant for the job. In recognition of the exceptional work he did as a graduate student at WSU Chris was just awarded the Entomological Society of America's Pacific Branch graduate student award for leadership in applied entomology! He will be presented the award at the ESA's Pacific Branch's Annual meeting in Tucson, Arizona this spring.

Chris has already become very involved in the various grower programs at LWWC. He is in charge of the demonstration vineyard at the Lodi Wine & Visitor Center, is helping with workbook workshops, analyzing BIFS pest monitoring data, and helping plan future grower meetings. He is looking forward to meeting many LWWC growers during the upcoming months.

On the extracurricular side of things, Chris is an avid fly fisherman, enjoys skiing, and rock climbing. And yes, he enjoys wine!

It is great to have Chris on the LWWC staff and I think you will all discover that he is a real asset to the Lodi wine industry.



The 2002 year was a difficult year, although quality was very good, while yields were varied but around average on a per acre basis. The total grape supply and low grape prices indicated the wine market supply lines were filled beyond demand, even though demand continued to increase slightly. The problem last year and again this year will be Cabernet Sauvignon, to some degree Merlot and Zinfandel. There was too much Chardonnay, but demand may stabilize that supply already. While Sauvignon Blanc and Pinot Grigio (Gris, might not be preferred with the current state of U.S. relations with France!) are in short supply. Grafting and vine removal may help considerably and if the economy begins to turn up with an average crop size, the area may begin to see some cash flow relief this year. While the once majestic presence of Flame Tokay continues to fade.

If you're in farming today, you automatically qualify as an optimist. The \$30 billion dollar-plus state budget fiasco is also affecting many sectors of the economy, including agriculture and it intensifies the impact of costs for growers. One question being asked more often is: What will happen now? A lot of people may have a response, but nobody has the answer. Other questions I hear are: Where do I cut costs? How do I increase yield? How do I get a better price?

The first question may be answered with making assessments of your operation and not spending as much on those inputs that don't affect the long-term health of the vines. However, a delicate balance of disease or pest control must be maintained so as not to reduce fruit quality. The second question, dealing with increasing yields, most often requires increased inputs and, paradoxically, can worsen the supply side lowering prices. The third question also includes similar financial input demands and at the same time maybe less crop! Three items I think may be a partial answer all three questions: irrigation

management, nitrogen application, and pest control. With drip irrigation there has been more interest in water application for vineyards and in Regulated Deficit Irrigation (RDI).

Last year there was definitely less irrigation going on early or as frequently or heavily as in years past. There were some stress problems last year, when some hot spells hit. This year rainfall is about 10.5 inches and if normal conditions prevail, there will be a little less than average soil moisture available at budbreak. That can be valuable in controlling vigor and improving quality, but care should be taken not to overdo vine stress. If your vineyard is on shallow soil, very sandy soil or gravelly soil more monitoring and caution are required. Or if the vineyard is very old, on it's own roots and has some nematode problems, caution should also be used during hot spells.

Besides saving in water application, the amount of nitrogen applied can be significantly reduced for one year, or more in some cases. Nitrogen formulation can be an alternative. The vines have no short-term problem with how inexpensive (cheap) a form of nitrogen you use. For the long term some of the more expensive formulations or compost are definitely worth the investment, but currently the sustainable vineyards will be the solvent ones. I am seeing and hearing of more "guaranteed" and expensive cures being offered, especially foliar and biological ones.

Do tolerate more insect damage for this year, and don't worry about any disease other than powdery mildew. For the ever-present mildew problems, sulfur dust works as good as ever and costs about \$3.30 each application per acre versus \$7.25 for wettable sulfur or \$26.20 per acre for other sprays. If vines are balanced in growth from RDI and less nitrogen, less leaf removal or none at all may work for most vineyards. Talk to your winery about what may be a reasonable strategy for each block.

The Glassy-Winged Sharpshooter

(GWSS) has been held at bay so far, but continued vigilance is needed and now that watch will include the Vine Mealybug (VMB), which can cause fruit damage, vine injury and increased control costs. With increased costs, more regulations and lower prices I am often asked by media people: "How do growers farm that way?" Unfortunately growers know the answer is: you don't. As bad as things may seem, with some belt tightening and due diligence, the Lodi District should still fare well over the short run and the long-term still looks especially good.

With more Lodi appellation wines and even vineyard-designated wines coming into the market, they will help provide economic benefits for growers across the board. More excellent quality fruit will also be needed by north coast wineries to produce premium wines at reasonable costs. Deficit irrigation can help attain fruit quality while reducing pest control costs and water use (and pumping costs). While not a huge savings it's not often that a management strategy that calls for less input can improve wine quality and hopefully grape prices with it.

All things considered, quality fruit and well crafted wines will help maintain and build on the progress local vineyards have earned over the last few years of good times. As bad as the state budget situation is, the U.C. Cooperative Extension office will be open for your questions, but we will see some more permanent downsizing. The wisdom of establishing and continuing the LWVC will be more evident and an important factor in the next few years.

Please Fill Out Your Grower Survey!

Around the beginning of February you would have received in the mail the IPM Program Grower Survey Questionnaire. It is very important that as many LWWC members as possible complete this survey and return it in the self-addressed and stamped envelope you received with the survey. Your answers will be invaluable to LWWC staff for tailoring the IPM Program to fit your needs. It takes about 15-20 minutes to complete the questionnaire.

You may be assured of complete confidentiality. Your name will never be placed on the questionnaire or appear in any discussion of the results. **When analysis of the feedback form is completed, all name and address files will be destroyed.**

For those of you not actively farming winegrapes any more but who received a survey, please phone us at the LWWC office so we can remove your name from the mailing list. If a farm manager handles the day-to-day management of your vineyard it may be best to give the questionnaire to them to fill out and let us know you have done so.

Thank You!

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

MARCH 12 1pm – 4pm
LWWC Quality Enhancement Program,
Wine & Roses Garden Ballroom, Limited to 150 people.
RSVP (209) 367-4727.

MARCH 28-29
Spring Wine Show
Lodi Grape Festival Grounds.

APRIL 2 8am – 10:30am
Weed identification and management field day.
Kurt Hembree, Anil Shrestha UC IPM Weed Ecologist
and UC Cooperative Extension Farm Advisor will be the
main speaker. Location will be announced in a postcard.

APRIL 26 2pm – 5pm
6th Annual Rhone Ranger Tasting
at Fort Mason, San Francisco.
For more info: (707) 939-8014 or
www.rhonerangers.org

MAY 8 9am-1pm
LWWC Clay Shoot
Birds Landing.

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