



The Road to Lodi - Mike Wanless

Sustainable Winegrowing Director, Lodi Winegrape Commission

I would like to introduce myself to those of you who have not met me. My name is Mike Wanless and I am replacing Cliff Ohmart who served the Commission so well for 13 years. I took this position because it represents a great opportunity in two areas. The first area of great interest to me is the continued development of sustainable viticulture; the second is furthering our skills in producing high quality, profitable winegrapes. They are intertwined and will be my primary focus.

How did I come to this point? It probably all started in my grandparents cherry orchard in Oregon. It was there that I learned the vagaries of weather, both at your own orchard and at the competitors' (California), and that it can be a good thing to have other income than your farm to pay the bills. I also learned the importance of the hired help at harvest time; it took a lot of timely hands in those days to pick all the cherries. And, I also learned from my brother, that it is best to spit out the pits. Fast forward to my education at UC Davis where I was pre vet for about 3 minutes, something about the combination of Biochemistry and bloody animals didn't quite fit. I did find great interest in agriculture and pest management, ultimately receiving degrees in Plant Science and Integrated Pest Management while I learned from some legendary and pragmatic professors and employers. I spent the 80's as an independent PCA developing and following pest management strategies for the multitude of crops that are able to grow in the Sacramento Valley. At the time, pest scouting and economic thresholds were fairly unheard of and the ag chemical PCA's (or independents) were not nearly as receptive to the practices that they now provide as a service. I farmed briefly on my own until the combination of the Med Fly (remember that) and the hottest June in 100 years one caused me to seek employment with others. It was during



this period that I came to understand the value of capitalization, and gained an appreciation of family, and of those who have been successfully farming for generations. I worked in the seed industry running several research farms and managing offshore seed production. For a brief period I was "Mr. Mom", a time I cherish for the relationship I had with my daughter, but drove me crazy trying to get anything done when she decided to quit taking naps.

I escaped to Wentz Bros. and literally started below ground level, digging ditches, and ultimately planning and planting vineyards and managing the viticulture fertility, pest management and irrigation programs for their 3000 acre operation. During this time I found that my father-in-laws relatives had a vacant vineyard property that had been in the family for over a century. I replanted the vineyard and still farm and make wine from it today. In Livermore, the problems with market recognition for the quality product they sell are very similar to what we have here in Lodi. I also represented Wentz at various Code of Sustainable Winegrowing Practices meetings where I became very familiar with the Lodi Workbook. While I did not want to leave, I was convinced by my good friend Ed Weber (Napa County Viticulture Farm Advisor) to come to Napa and work for Diageo as their viticulturist. I was also responsible for their substantial acreage on the central coast and in Washington State, another region trying to find traction outside their own geographical area. I was able to advance the companies vineyards thru the Fish Friendly Farming Program, the Sustainable Winegrowing Project and ultimately in the SWP certification processes, while at the same time managing the vineyards to garner the critical scores that the salespeople love to have. Coming here, I hope to do the same, advance the sustainability of the region while creating wonderful, profitable winegrapes for desirable wines.

BOGLE OFFERS SUSTAINABILITY BONUS We would like to congratulate Warren Bogle of Bogle Winery for stepping up with their great offer of a bonus for those growers participating in the Lodi Rules program. It is really great to see them positively reward those who are putting in the effort to take the region one more step ahead of the competition. Our goal is to demonstrate to the public our continued commitment to sustainability. Thank you Bogle Family!

IN THE VINEYARD

BY PAUL S. VERDEGAAL

University of California Cooperative Extension Farm Advisor

The 2009 year ended with a fairly normal rainfall total for the months of October, November and December around 6.1 inches for the north County and at slightly below average levels around 3.8 total inches. The big difference was the 2.9 inches on October 13th during the last half of the 2009 harvest. There were some definite effects, mostly negative, but somewhat tolerable for fruit delivered after the rain compared to fruit harvested before the rain. The 2009 vintage will probably be a mixed lot as in some years past. A few that come to mind are 1979, 1982, 1984, and 1989.

Chilling hours are not as critical for grapes as other tree crops, but can have an effect on uniformity and strength of budbreak. Chilling hour totals have been about average and fog has been a bit more of a common occurrence, as in the "Good Old" days when the sun often disappeared for three to four weeks at a time. Chilling hours (hours below 45 F) have totaled slightly less than the long term average at 672 hours for 2009-10 compared to about 752 hours for the 14 year average. ET of winter cover and weeds has been low, so we have a good chance to mitigate the last three years of drought. But I better not say any more at this point.

As of the first week in March the Lodi District is well above average for this point in the season at 15.6 inches of rain. Last year at his time there was a total of 5.9 inches

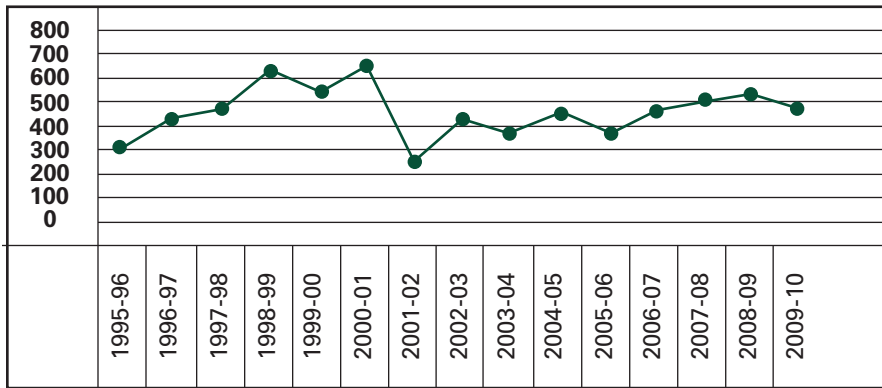
the Lodi area.

At this point it won't be necessary to think about late winter irrigation. Many local vineyards don't need much, if any irrigation before mid to late June for most years and this may be one of them. But it is good to be prepared for irrigation before that, as the last three years of drought have taken a toll on vines. There have been many more calls on vines with dieback, "potassium deficiency", yellow leaves, red blotchy red leaves, and salt burn. Other problems can be the main cause, but three dry years have exacerbated many problems.

The rainfall has been well spaced and occurring in good amounts, with intermittent breaks to dry out. So far Lodi is about 120% of long term average totals to this point in the season. With good spring soil moisture vines should show a positive response to this year's conditions. The table below is a summary of the pattern and totals for the last six years in

With the recent warm weather Chardonnay and other early varieties are

HISTORICAL CHILLING HOURS FOR NOV/DEC



AVERAGE DATE OF BUDBREAK*

LODI CHARDONNAY 1986-2010

Year	Date in March	Year	Date in March
2010	14		
2009	20	1997	1
2008	12	1996	15
2007	14	1995	5
2006	15	1994	14
2005	2	1993	22
2004	13	1992	13
2003	10	1991	21
2002	13	1990	23
2001	17	1989	17
2000	17	1988	13
1999	25	1987	26
1998	14	1986	9

RAINFALL SAN JOAQUIN COUNTY - LODI

of rain in	Total Inches	Oct-Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May
2005	24.7	10.4	3.2	3.3	3.5	1.4	1.3
2006	23.7	7.1	5.4	1.1	5.2	3.8	0.8
2007	12.1	4.6	0.27	4.3	0.6	2.3	T
2008	13.6	4.5	7.3	1.8	0.1	0	0
2009	15.1	4.0	1.9	5.3	1.9	0.7	1.3
2010	?	6.1*	4.5	3.6	1.4		

* Buddbreak = 10% of buds at 1/2 inch shoot length or first leaf unfolding

* 2.9 inches on October 13th

going through budbreak. This is close to the average date, usually around March 15 + 5 days. Soil moisture is good and vines are “bleeding” easily and strongly compared to the last three years during the drought.

Spring of 2008 was the first year since 1972 that frost occurred statewide. There were some scattered frost events last year in early March of 2009; and more of a problem in almonds than grapes, but it is best to be prepared.

Just to review some old, but good information on soil conditions and cold during the early spring from work done by past Farm Advisors Jim Kissler and Don Rough:

TEMPERATURE COMPARISONS OF VINEYARD FLOORS*

- * Firm bare ground, that is wet +2° F
 - * Firm bare ground, that is dry --
 - * Freshly disked soil -2° degrees colder
 - * High cover crop (24 to 30 inches) -2° to 4° (possibly 6 to 8° colder)
 - * Low cover crop (< 24 inches) -1° to 3° degrees colder
 - * Mowed cover crop -1/2° F
- *Kissler and Rough

A summary of Spring Frost events over the last 76 years for San Joaquin County show that most years are not a problem for vineyards, but we seem to have entered a colder cycle than the recent past.

HISTORICAL DATES OF LAST SPRING FROST

1933	Late April
1961	April 19 and 20
1964	April 24
1972	March 26, 27, and 28
1983	April 13
1984	April 20
1997	April 5
1999	April 9
2001	April 8
2008	April 15, 20 and 24

Weed growth is more than last year as temperatures have been more normal and rainfall abundant, but the fall and early winter were dry enough to slow general weed development. Good control should be achievable with some normal rainfall patterns with Mother Nature’s help. There are some newer materials available and rotation or selection for particular weed species should be considered. If you missed the 58th Lodi Grape day you can check out some of the slides from weed presentations by Kurt Hembree of Fresno County and John Roncoroni of Napa County CE. At www.cesanjoaquin.ucdavis.edu and if you have related questions, check in at www.ipm.ucdavis.edu or www.wric.ucdavis.edu.

Be on the watch for gophers as they remain active and are already establishing new burrows. Trapping, baits, or even a couple of good cats can reduce population levels. Gopher populations were high last year and these may carry over into this year. Ground squirrels may become active soon with the warm, dry weather. Unfortunately, they begin feeding on seedling grasses, but can be dealt with by initial baiting with toxicant-free bait to get them used to feeding in order to take actual control bait. Smoke bombs in burrows or acute lead poisoning with a long rifle also works.

As spring arrives, be aware of soil moisture conditions and plant water demand, but be careful about “getting too far ahead”. If there are soil problems to deal with such as pH issues or water infiltration, soil amendments or physical mixing may be needed. After plant growth is well developed and temperatures have warmed up, the macro-nutrients nitrogen or potassium can be effectively applied. For vines, that’s after bloom. For micro-nutrients, earlier is better, as early spring growth is needed for efficient uptake of nutrients such as zinc and boron. Besides the cost efficiency more attention is being directed to anything that goes on the ground with a potential for leaching by irrigation or rainfall.

A thought for the day during Spring

Lincoln's September 1859 Milwaukee speech:

Every blade of grass is a study; And to produce two, Where there was but one, Is both a profit and a pleasure. And not grass alone; But soils, seeds, and seasons. Hedges, ditches, and fences, Draining, droughts, and irrigation -- Plowing, hoeing, and harrowing -- Reaping, mowing, and threshing - - Saving crops, pests of crops, diseases of crops, And what will prevent or cure them -- Implements, utensils, and machines, Their relative merits, And [how] to improve them -- Hogs, horses, and cattle -- Sheep, goats, and poultry -- Trees, shrubs, fruits, plants, and flowers -- The thousand things Of which these are specimens -- Each a world of study within itself.

WEATHER FORECAST SERVICE

The Lodi Winegrape Commission provides a free weather forecast service. Please signup and you will receive a great product that not only contains a regional forecast, but also a daily weather summary for almost 20 local weather stations. The report includes basic weather data; highs, lows and rainfall, and the addition of the Gubler powdery mildew index and Growing Degree Days. This is a great tool and you can’t beat the price. It even can be sent in a format that works on your PDA or smartphone. We currently have 125 users, but there are a lot of you that should find this information useful especially for fine tuning your mildew and irrigation activities. Send me an email (mikew@lodiwine.com) to sign up.

LODI RULES ORIENTATION MEETINGS

We had an orientation meeting for Lodi Rules on Mar 8th with the Sustainable Vision workshop to follow on the 19th. Over 25 participants attended with great questions being asked. It was pointed out that if growers want to group together with an individual or business entity acting as the point person for the auditor, that group could amortize the expenses of the program. Each grower would be responsible for their own program development and recordkeeping while they would supply their data sets to the keeper of the records prior to the audit. It would work best and might be less time consuming if they worked together to develop their “sustainable vision” plans and then fine tuned them to meet their particular situations. Please call Mike Wanless at the Commission office if you have any question regarding this option.

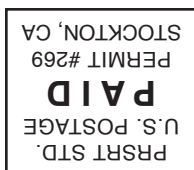
April 15 9:00am SJVAPCD-Hearing on Open Burning, 1990 E. Gettysburg Ave, Fresno, CA
April 20 9:00-10:30am, Weed Management in Lodi Vineyards, Burgundy Hall, Lodi Grape Festival

RESEARCH COMMITTEE MEETING

At our last Research Committee meeting we had a lively discussion about several subjects. One was about our proposed Research Day. We discussed putting together a mini symposium on “objective quality measurement- fact or fiction or, a way to better relations with our winery partners”. If you have suggestions for speakers or subjects for this seminar or any others, please drop me or any members of the committee an email or phone call.

Another subject that came up was the de facto elimination of ag burning. A hearing will take place April 15th in Fresno for those who would like to express opinions or learn more. Craig Thompson is organizing an interest group. You can view the rule and schedule at www.valleyair.org/workshops/public_workshops_idx.htm

Feel free to contact myself or any of the following research committee members with questions or suggestions. Stanton Lange(chair), Joe Valente, Steve Quashnick, Brad Goerhing, Paul Verdegaal, Charlie Starr, Lee Caton, Arthur Chavez, Rod Doehring, Stan Grant, Mike Harder, Cindy Johnson, Frank Olagary, Bill Thomas, and Chris Storm.



RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

2545 W. TURNER RD.
LODI, CA 95242

LODI
WINEGRAPE
COMMISSION

