



LODI GROWER NEWSLETTER

AUGUST 2013 lodiwine.com

New Lodi grower website launched - lodigrowers.com

After six months of development, the Commission staff is excited to announce that the new Lodi grower website was launched on August 15. You can access the site by entering www.lodigrowers.com into your browser or by searching for "Lodi growers". The grower website fills an important and previously unmet need. The site is a "one-stop shop" for information on the full extent of grower resources provided by the Commission. We hope you find the website useful, and encourage you to bookmark the site or set it as your homepage to make it easy to visit on a regular basis. The website will be updated regularly with new content, including weather forecasts, a calendar of Commission meetings and events, and a rolling Lodi Grower (@Lodigrowers) Twitter feed. Read on to discover more about the website's major features. Better yet, visit lodigrowers.com to see for yourself.

The main feature of the site is the "Coffee Shop": A science-based blog for practical viticulture research and technology written by local experts and growers. New articles will be posted biweekly at the least, so be sure to check in frequently for the latest updates. Our trusted county UCCE farm adviser, Paul Verdegaal, will be a regular contributor to the Coffee Shop. Paul has been writing insightful articles for the Commission's print newsletters for years, and we are happy to extend this partnership with him. Stan Grant, Progressive Viticulture, will also be a frequent contributor. Stan is a soil scientist by training and is a prolific author of original viticulture research articles. Both of these authors understand growers' needs and we are fortunate to tap into their expertise.

In the "Marketplace," you will find a grower and vineyard supplier directory. The searchable grower directory is a voluntary listing of growers, the varieties they produce, Lodi Rules certification status, and contact information. This directory will be useful for connecting wineries that are looking to purchase winegrapes with Lodi growers. The vineyard

supplier directory is a searchable version of the Commission's printed 2013 Vineyard Supplier Directory. This directory can be used to easily look up local businesses offering vineyard products and services.

The website will also house a comprehensive set of Lodi Rules resources. In the "Grower Resources" section, certified growers can access current lists of PEAS units, current year certification deadlines, vineyard sign order forms, certification manuals, and other frequently requested documents. New to the Lodi Rules certification program? We also outline the step-by-step certification process. In the Lodi Rules "Winery Resources" section, wineries interested in sourcing Lodi Rules certified grapes and using the Certified Green seal on their labels will find everything they need from application instructions to advice on sourcing certified grapes.



**Interested in building new relationships with winegrape buyers but are not already in the grower directory?
To be added contact Moly Bjork at (209) 367-4727 or at molly@lodiwine.com.**

Grower Bio: The Dhaliwal Family

Harinder and Ravinder (who goes by Bobby) Dhaliwal told me that for them, growing winegrapes is a “hobby”. I spoke with the brothers over lunch in July, and it quickly became clear to me that these two were definitely not “hobby” farmers. In fact, the words “modest” and “hardworking” most accurately describe these two men. In addition to full-time, off-farm careers, the brothers and their extended family farm over 1,000 acres of winegrapes and are serious, savvy, and innovative winegrowers with a long-term vision for their business.



What's your story? As young boys in 1983, Harinder and Bobby moved with their family to the United States from the Punjab state of India. Their parents' dream was to make a new life for the family, especially with regards to their children, who they wanted to receive a good education. Harinder and Bobby's parents chose Lodi because they had family ties to the area. Being new to the area was not without struggles, however. In India, the brothers' parents had careers as an established veterinarian and a respected school teacher, but making ends meet in Lodi meant working in the vineyards. Nevertheless, Harinder and Bobby's parents appreciated these new opportunities available to them. In high school, the brothers gained relevant experience by working with vineyard field crews. Later, they both went on to graduate from UC Davis. In 1988, the family purchased their first piece of land and have been growing grapes and thriving ever since. Today, the family owns and leases over 1,000 plus acres. The brothers are proud of their family's self-made success, says Bobby, “We are out to prove ourselves.” The brothers credit their successes to strong family unity, along with the drive of their father, Amrik, and uncles, Sarbjit, and Jasbir, who regularly demonstrate a “hands on” philosophy of farming. “You can't be an absentee grower,”

say the brothers. Today, Harinder works for Treasury Wine Estates as Vineyard Manager for the company's southern Napa Valley ranches. He directs vineyard operations from Carneros to Yountville. Not only does he work in multiple regions within California, but he has also spent extended periods of time in Australia where Treasury Wine Estates is based. Harinder's cross-regional and multi-national viticulture experience is one of the reasons for his wide expertise and awareness of cutting edge vineyard technology. Bobby works in the field of education and, while he dresses the part with pressed clothes and polished shoes, is as comfortable in the vineyard as his brother, Harinder. Both Dhaliwal brothers spend considerable hours per week managing their vineyards in addition to their off-farm careers.

Why are your vineyards Lodi Rules-certified? The Dhaliwal's certify about 90% of their 1,000 acres in the Lodi Rules program. Although they are not being paid a price premium for their certified grapes, the Dhaliwal's are convinced that certification gives them a competitive edge in the market. Harinder says, “We are not getting paid more, that's for sure. However, wineries consider us better growers because we are certified. We can say that with confidence.” Harinder tells me that because of certification, they are treated as “priority growers”. According to Bobby, it's a quality issue: Certification helps them grow better quality winegrapes. “You can see the quality yourself,” he says.

Are you experimenting with any new practices or technologies? In the viticulture industry in Australia, where Harinder works for a portion of the year, multi-functional harvesters are extremely popular. The two brothers are contemplating this same technology for use in their Lodi vineyards. The remarkable aspect of multi-functional harvesters is that they do much more than harvest. The machines are equipped to spray up to 5 rows in one pass and come with a three-point hitch and PTO drive for implements such as 4-row mowers. The machines also include a tool bar for mounting mechanization implements such as box pruners, cane thinners, or shoot and fruit thinners. So far, Harinder has seen only one of these impressive multi-functional harvesters in Lodi. Initially, he was impressed with the machine's performance when we were able use it in Napa. There, the vines are producing 3-4 tons per acre. This being said, he wonders if the harvesters will be able to handle Lodi's extra volume at an average of 10-12 tons per acre as quickly as traditional harvesters. According to Harinder, these multi-functional harvesters are designed

around VSP trellis systems and he is not convinced that they will perform optimally with the California sprawl systems in Lodi. Only use will tell. The brothers wonder if there are other growers in Lodi who are as serious about experimenting with multi-functional harvesters as they are.

What are the major challenges facing Lodi agriculture and what are you doing to prepare? Having worked for years as vineyard laborers themselves, the Dhaliwal family has thought deeply about the importance of strong employer-employee relationships. Both brothers agree that one of the biggest challenges facing Lodi viticulture, and California agriculture a whole, is the rising cost and decreasing availability of reliable farm labor. The brothers' perspective is that by building strong relationships based on trust and respect with their dedicated crew and contract laborers, they can mitigate some of these uncertainties. The Dhaliwal's have invested in their employees in more ways than one. For example, their employees have the option of subsidized housing and are charged only for the monthly utilities of water and electricity. Just like many other growers, the Dhaliwal's strive to pay their employees competitive wages well above the State minimum. The brothers tell me that they have, on multiple occasions, provided interest-free loans to their long-term employees from Mexico who needed help covering the cost of legal fees and applications for legal status in California. The brothers believe that investing in their employees via means such as these pay off financially in the long run by ensuring employee satisfaction, thus producing committed and reliable employees. Since the brothers enjoy giving others the same opportunities that were afforded to them, these investments also pay off personally. Given hard work and the right opportunities, Bobby is adamant that any of today's field laborers can be tomorrow's landowners. In fact, Bobby is living proof that this idea is possible.

Looking ahead. Within the past two years, the Dhaliwal's have established approximately 320 acres of new winegrapes. The majority of their own vineyards were replanted upon purchase. Needless to say, they have made a major investment in their business. "We are in this business for the long run," says Bobby. The brothers are strong believers in not cutting any corners when it comes to developing new vineyards. While talking with the brothers, I had the opportunity to visit one of their young vineyards near the corner of Devries and Armstrong roads. They showed me the many small, but significant, ways that this vineyard was developed to withstand the test of time



(along with heavy crop loads and mechanical pruners). Aside from typical ground preparation such as cross-ripping and fumigation, what makes this vineyard atypical is the attention to detail. For example, after doing some research and talking with local suppliers, the brothers learned that while American-made steel t-posts and cross arms are more expensive than their over-seas counterparts, they are also stronger and more resistant to bending. The brothers take immense pride in buying American-made products. "We live in this country so, of course, we want to invest in this economy," say the brothers. After having harvesters bend and break too many t-posts over the years, the decision to upgrade to American-made products was easy. In addition, the brothers also selected larger-than-usual gauge wires for use along the cordon, cross arms, and end-posts. This was done to support the weight of the high yielding vertical position quadrilateral trellis system. An important detail they chose to consider was the wire fasteners at every cross arm. In most vineyards the wire tension is anchored between the end-posts, and the cross arms only support vertical weight, not horizontal tension. As the vineyard ages, this can lead to slack. To help counteract this problem, Harinder and Bobby use fasteners to lock the wire onto each cross arm. Horizontal wire tension is distributed between all t-posts as opposed to only the end-posts. This makes for a tough system that can better withstand mechanical pruning and harvesting as well as large crop loads. The Dhaliwal family is looking to further expand their operation, but scarcity of land and skyrocketing expenses are prohibitive. Furthermore, Harinder wonders, "Are we are setting ourselves up for another 'grape glut' with all the acreage being planted recently? I can only hope everyone is planting what they have contracts for."

In the Vineyard BY PAUL VERDEGAAL, UCCE FARM ADVISER, SAN JOAQUIN COUNTY

After two cooler than average seasons, 2013 is trending warmer than the past few years. Although we started out just a few days behind average with bud break, warm days and even warmer nights added Growing Degree Days (GDD) quickly. When the hot spell hit in late June/early July, accumulated GDD were about 12 to 14 days ahead of average. Some color in Zinfandel occurred as early as June 23. Surprisingly, the 100°F days actually seemed to stall véraison (by observation, anyway). As harvest approaches, it looks like ripening is back on track, while still remaining a good 10 days ahead of the long-term average. The number of 100°F days in Lodi has not been excessive with a total of six. On average, days in excess of 100°F are about 17-19, placing this season within a "normal," if slightly earlier, range so far.

Growing conditions have been warm and dry this year. As a matter of fact, my truck windshield has shown very few days with any morning dew present. This is in comparison to most years, where – on many mornings – my windshield shows a significant amount of dew. This year, I can literally count on one hand the number of days where dew was present, with half of those days occurring very recently. A contributing factor to the lack of dew may have been the many windy days that we experienced early in the season. In fact, there have a number of windy days throughout April, May and June, while warm temperatures have prevailed until mid-July. While disease pressure has been severe since bloom, powdery mildew has been somewhat slow to surface. Two personal observations come to mind: 1) Although we haven't had rapid or severe fluctuations from cool to hot, there has been a fair amount of sulfur burn this year; 2) glyphosate, irrespective of any resistance concerns, seems to be working slower this year. With concern to weather patterns, the positive news is that the winter and spring rains mitigated the dry soil conditions, which have developed over the 2012 and 2013 seasons. This year's total rainfall was 15.8 total inches in the north side of the county. Heavy fall rains helped recharge the lower root zones to mitigate this year's challenging, record-dry spring.

The crop looks to be about average across varieties. Higher than average exceptions depend on vine age, variety, site, and grower/winemaker goals. The first Zinfandel berries began to color on June 23rd. This is compared to typical signs of color and berry softening around Independence Day. Cluster counts are good and, in many cases, as good as or better than last year. This being said, cluster size and set vary by variety and location. This possibly was caused by the somewhat erratic temperatures during a rapid

bloom period. Overall berry size may be smaller this year as extremely dry conditions prevailed during the early spring development of berries. While little to no berry shrivel is apparent this year, some sunburn, raisining and berry cracking are easier to find this year as harvest approaches.

Vine Mealy bug continues to spread throughout the county. Be aware of any new infestations, which are often indicated by sooty black mold or excessive honeydew in clusters, spurs, or cordons. A high degree of ant activity in and around vines can also indicate problem areas. When searching for signs of pest infestation, it's a good idea to focus at spots where birds tend to perch or roost. Since it was found in 2009, the Light Brown Apple Moth (LBAM) continues to expand its territory in the south end of the county around Manteca. LBAM is very similar to Omnivorous Leaf Roller (OLR) in appearance and in the number of host crops. While it has the same damage potential, one can rejoice in the fact that this pest can be controlled to a level of manageability. Interestingly enough, it does appear in some areas of the state that LBAM is being controlled by native beneficial insects. You can learn more about LBAM at <http://www.ipm.ucdavis.edu/EXOTIC/lightbrown-applemoth.html>. The Ag Commissioner's staff is currently working hard to monitor both of these threats.

The demand for winegrapes continues to improve for most varieties such as Cabernet Sauvignon, Petite Sirah, Muscat varieties, Red Zinfandel, and even Merlot, among others. Many other varieties such as Chardonnay, Pinot Grigio, Pinot Noir and Sauvignon Blanc also seem to be in high demand. The "mini boom" in planting new vineyards harkens back to the "mega booms" of the 1970's and 1990's. While there still remains a general sluggishness with regards to the overall economy, local growers and agriculture are still in a relatively good position compared to most other sectors of the state and national economy.

This year an average grape crop may help maintain a balanced inventory in the wineries and slow any potential price drops. While costs and regulations continue to increase for individual growers, better prices and more recognition for affordable wines of excellent quality can help sustain operations during the ongoing onslaught of rules, regulations and inflation. Although there are still a number of unknowns yet to unfold, the Lodi Appellation and San Joaquin County as a whole are in a good position to continue the tradition of quality wines of value.

Follow the LWC on Twitter

Twitter is more than a funny word. It's a powerful communication tool, that the Commission is now experimenting with as a means to help keep growers in the know. Over the past two years, the Commission has been successfully using Twitter as a means of communicating with consumers. Now, we are extending these communication efforts to include winegrape growers and – more broadly – the viticulture industry as a whole.

So, what is Twitter and how can it be used in agriculture? Simply put, Twitter is a technological tool that enables subscribers to quickly and succinctly share information at no cost. Twitter's emphasis on content brevity makes it quick and easy to use. Unlike other forms of social media or traditional media, a single "tweet" is limited to only 140 characters. This format allows for streamlined sharing of useful information among a community of peers. Twitter's utility for growers increases with every new grower who participates. The more growers tweeting useful information, the more useful it will be.

The type of practical information growers can share and access on Twitter includes just about anything from frost or heat alerts, observations about new pest lifecycle stages or outbreaks, or comments about new practices or technologies being testing in the field. One Lodi grower tweeted, "Everyone go home - 100°" when his weather station indicated that weather conditions were too hot for field work. Other growers have tweeted observations of the first sign of bud break or véraison. Twitter can also be used for posing a viticulture question to a wide audience. Growers have been known to snap a picture of an unknown pest or vine symptom with their smartphone camera, and include the picture with a question in a tweet. Others using Twitter are able to respond by sharing advice about solutions. The Commission recently tweeted, "Leafroll or red blotch? You can tell the difference by the dark veins. Leaf roll will have light veins."

In addition to field observations, Twitter can be used to share articles, news and events. "Want a better understanding of fruit/planting contracts?" The tweet included a link to an article on the topic. Industry journals such as *Practical Winery* and *Vineyard* use twitter to announce research articles featured in the journal. The Commission is using Twitter to remind growers of upcoming meetings and events such as breakfast meetings, field days and grower socials.

In addition to following the Lodi Winegrape Commission



(@LodiGrower), you might also be interested in these other organizations using Twitter:

- CA Farm Bureau (@CAFarmBureau)
- Practical Winery and Vineyard Journal (@PWVJournal)
- University of California Agriculture and Natural Resources (@ucanr)
- Wines and Vines (@WinesandVines)
- Wine Business (@WineBusiness)
- Wine Institute (@CalifWines_US)

Getting started with Twitter is relatively easy. If you already have a Twitter account, simply follow @LodiGrower. If you are new to Twitter, follow the directions below to create an account.

- Option 1: Access twitter.com with your smartphone or computer. Option 2: Download the Twitter app onto your smartphone from the Apple app store or Google play.
- Follow the instructions to set up a new account.
- Search for @LodiGrower.
- Click the "Follow" button.
- To post a tweet, click on the quill pen icon; type your message (remember, posts are limited to 140 characters); reread your post to make sure that there are no errors; click "Tweet". You did it!

Understanding smartphones and social media can be tricky and seems to come more naturally to some than it does to others. If you're having trouble setting up your Twitter account, please feel free to stop by the Commission offices with your smartphone for a brief tutorial. Twitter is easier than you think!



PHOTO CREDIT: CHARLIE STARR

Vit Pic As the adage goes, a picture is worth a thousand words. As you can see here, captured in a Lodi vineyard, this green lacewing is in the larva stage of its lifecycle and is a winegrower's friend as it will prey on Vine Mealy Bugs (VMB). As VMB is a common vineyard pest found throughout Lodi, lacewings are considered beneficial predators. In the larvae stage, lacewings are alligator-like with curved, piercing mandibles which they use to prey on soft-bodied insects, including aphids. Green lacewing adults are 1/2 inch long and have net-veined wings and golden eyes. Lacewing eggs are suspended at the tips of long and erect stalks. (Description taken from eXtension.com) Learn how to identify a green lacewing, include them in your monitoring regime, and try to use pesticides that do not harm them.

Results from the LWC's Research Ad Outreach Survey

One of the main objectives of the Lodi Winegrape Commission is to provide growers with opportunities for learning about vineyard management. The Commission works to achieve this goal by offering growers a suite of research and outreach services. Breakfast meetings and field days are two examples that many growers are familiar with. Other examples include the *Lodi Winegrower's Workbook*, the *Vineyard Supplier Directory*, and the Lodi Rules for Sustainable Winegrowing certification program. In an effort to evaluate the success of our programs and identify opportunities for improvement, the Commission delivered an online survey asking growers a number of questions regarding which research and outreach programs they find most important and for an overall evaluation of the success of our current programs. Results from this survey are presented here. The results will be used by Commission staff and the Research, Education, and Communication Committee as a reference point for future programs.

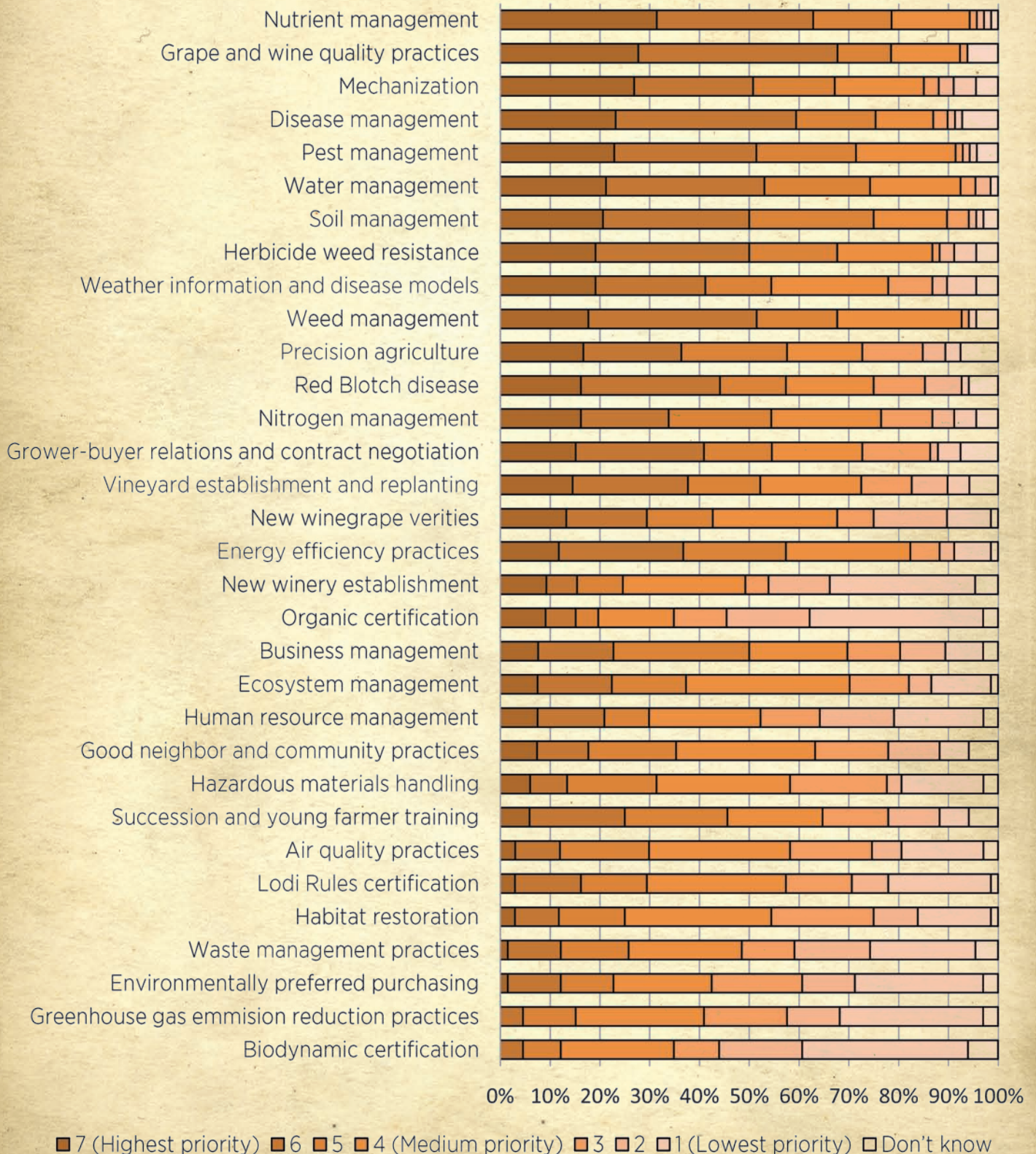
The survey was delivered via the Lodi Grower E-News during the first few weeks of July. Eighty-four surveys were completed. While this response captures only a fraction of Lodi's entire winegrowing community, the results are nevertheless useful as they constitute a representative sample of Lodi's growers and industry professionals.

How do survey respondents prioritize research and outreach topics? The survey asked growers to prioritize 32 different vineyard management topics on a seven-point scale with one representing "lowest priority" to seven being "highest priority". A "don't know" option was also available. The table on the next page reports the distribution of survey respondents who selected each level of prioritization. The table is sorted in decreasing order of percent of respondents to select "highest priority".

The Commission considers those topics that a large number of respondents rated as relatively high priority (ranking 5-7) to be strong candidates for future research and outreach efforts. The greatest number of respondents rated nutrient management as highest priority. Rounding out the top ten topics were grape and wine quality practices, mechanization, disease management, pest management, water management, soil management, herbicide weed resistance, weather information and disease models, and weed management. It appears that growers view these topics as having the greatest relevance to successful winegrowing. The Commission plans to consider these results as an important factor when making decisions about which topics to direct resources toward in the future.

Overall, how successful has the Commission been at providing opportunities for learning about vineyard management? The survey asked growers to rate the Commission's success at providing opportunities for learning about vineyard management on a seven-point scale with one representing "very unsuccessful" to seven being "very successful". Overall, respondents rated the Commission as overwhelmingly successful at achieving this important goal. Over 80% percent of respondents reported that they think the Commission has been successful at providing opportunities for learning about vineyard management. About 13% were neutral and 7% reported that they think the Commission has been unsuccessful. We take this as a strong "report card", and can move forward with confidence that the Commission's outreach programs have a strong track record of meeting growers' needs. This being said, we continue to be interested in further understanding and meeting the needs of those who are unsatisfied with the Commission's work.

Prioritization of topics for research and outreach in Lodi





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Have You Seen the New Lodi Rules Vineyard Signs?

The new Lodi Rules vineyard signs are helping to grow Lodi's reputation as an agricultural community that takes our environmental and social stewardship seriously. Keep an eye out for the new vineyard signs. Over 85 signs were ordered, and should soon start to pop up along country roadsides and in front of vineyards and wineries around Lodi.

The Commission is still taking orders. Signs are available for purchase to all growers participating in the Lodi Rules certification program and all wineries using the Certified Green seal on their wine labels.

Two sign options are available: A vertical orientation or a horizontal orientation. The vertical option (32" x 24") is designed for easy installation and its geometry is appropriate for tight spaces such as winery parking lots or seating areas (pictured). The horizontal option (24" x 32") is designed to be read from a passing car and so is well-suited for roadside vineyards. Feel free to choose either sign for any application. The signs will come with pre-drilled mounting holes. Signs can be customizable with your vineyard or winery name. We recommend installing the signs in high-visibility locations at your vineyard or winery.

Place your orders with Matthew Hoffman at matthew@lodiwine.com or (209) 367-4727. When placing your order, please include the following information:

- Number of signs (\$73 each).
- Sign orientation (horizontal or vertical).
- Number of posts with mounting hardware (\$22 each). Horizontal orientation signs require two posts; vertical orientation signs require one.
- Business name as you wish it to be printed on the sign. Sorry, no logos.

