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Esteemed California Sustainable Winegrowing Program LODI RULES™ Goes International
Israel's Golan Heights and Galil Mountain Wineries Achieve Historic Certification

January 17, 2018, LODI, CA – The LODI RULES™ Sustainable Winegrowing Program, created by the Lodi Winegrape Commission and third-party certified by Protected Harvest, is making its first foray into the international market. Golan Heights Winery and subsidiary Galil Mountain Winery of Israel have the first international vineyards certified sustainable under the rigorous and respected LODI RULES program. The wineries' combined 425 acres now enrolled in LODI RULES are in fact the first vineyards to become certified sustainable in all of Israel and represent the first international certification for any California-based sustainable viticulture certification program.

The Israeli vineyards join more than 45,000 acres and over 1,100 vineyard blocks in California certified under the LODI RULES Program in 2017, a 26 percent increase in acreage over 2016 due in large part to adoption of the program by winegrowers not only in the Lodi American Viticultural Area (AVA), but also by other farmers throughout California.

LODI RULES Sustainable Winegrowing Director, Dr. Stephanie Bolton, says the certifications in Israel are the result of decades of viticulture leadership from the Lodi AVA, located just south of Sacramento, CA. "We are extremely thankful to the many Lodi growers and scientists who developed the LODI RULES Program out of a desire to farm sustainably and to protect the land for future generations. It is from their original forward-thinking vision in the 1990s that we are able to share LODI RULES and sustainable farming certification with our international winegrowing community today."

Without a sustainable viticulture program in Israel, ecologically-minded, industry-leading Golan Heights Winery and Galil Mountain Winery searched the globe for a serious, meaningful sustainability program that would bring value to its operation, ultimately selecting LODI RULES. The LODI RULES Sustainable Winegrowing Program takes a comprehensive, progressive approach to sustainable farming. Victor Schoenfeld, Head Winemaker at Golan Heights Winery, agrees, "This is a milestone in our efforts to farm more sustainably in the framework of our constant holistic search to increase wine quality now and in the future. We very much see ourselves as caretakers of a very special spot on the planet. We hope to act as a model for others in the Israeli wine industry in order to promote sustainability in our industry as a whole.

We look forward to expanding our collaboration with LODI RULES in 2018 and beyond and are confident others in Israel will join us.”

For Protected Harvest, the Israeli wineries represent yet two more environmentally and socially responsible leaders joining the ranks of distinguished LODI RULES sustainable winegrowers. Protected Harvest Board President, Dr. William R. Horwath of University of California Davis, says, “The international growth represents a milestone and is the culmination of long-term efforts by Protected Harvest to incorporate certification methods for harvesting, efficient use of resources, environmental awareness and social responsibility into a strategic effort that satisfies the growing demands of the public for sustainably grown. These efforts are made possible by Dr. Cliff Ohmart, Protected Harvest Board Members, and the collaboration of the three organizations involved motivated by a persistent desire to maintain a high level of credibility exemplified in both Protected Harvest and the LODI RULES Program.”

LODI RULES for Sustainable Winegrowing

The LODI RULES Sustainable Winegrowing Program is America’s original sustainable viticulture program. Created by the Lodi Winegrape Commission and accredited by Protected Harvest, the LODI RULES Program promotes sustainable management of the entire vineyard ecosystem, including soils and water, business practices, human resources, and pest control with an emphasis on reducing pesticide risk to farm workers, consumers, small aquatic invertebrates, birds, and bees. Each of the 120+ farming practice standards is measurable, auditable, and addresses at least one sustainability aspect (environmental health, social equity, or economic viability). Most LODI RULES winegrowers voluntarily choose to farm sustainably because they believe in the value of the program. Their generational efforts in responsible viticulture are reflected in the high quality of LODI RULES sustainable grapes.

For more information about the LODI RULES Sustainable Winegrowing Program, visit lodirules.com.

Protected Harvest

Protected Harvest was established in 2001 as an independent certification organization, with the principal mission of advancing and certifying the use of sustainable agriculture practices through the development of stringent, transparent, and quantifiable standards. The Board of Directors is a collaboration of representatives from prominent environmental organizations, agricultural specialists, scientists, and marketing experts. The Board’s responsibility is to review and approve all standards as grounded in environmental science and practical for on-farm implementation.

For more information about Protected Harvest, visit protectedharvest.org.

Golan Heights Winery & Galil Mountain Winery

Golan Heights Winery is active in the areas of environmental responsibility and community involvement in northern Israel in general, and in the Golan Heights and Upper Galilee in particular. One of the winery’s main goals is to increase its positive impact on both the environment and society. Always leading the way, Golan Heights Winery was the leading organic winegrower in Israel and is now, along with its offshoot winery – the Galil Mountain Winery – the first to have certified sustainable vineyards. The winery exports to 32 countries around the globe.

For more information about Golan Heights Winery, visit golanwines.co.il/en.

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