Welcome!
Welcome to California Vine Lines, a new statewide quarterly report to Sacramento that provides updates about winegrape growing in California. Our goal is to help keep policymakers and regulators informed on issues of importance in the industry. Please feel free to reach out to the California Association of Winegrape Growers (CAWG) if you need additional information or if we can be of assistance.

California Wine: Good for the Economy!
California is the nation’s No. 1 wine state and the source of 85 percent of U.S. wine production. California wine makes a significant contribution to the nation and all 50 states by providing quality jobs, bolstering economies through tourism and taxes and enhancing communities through environmental stewardship and charitable giving. The Economic Impact of California Wine was commissioned by CAWG and Wine Institute.

Severe Weather Impacts Wine
Wine’s new normal: extreme weather events. Bloomberg News reports that in California, the 2017 crop will be smaller than expected, down anywhere from 5 percent to as much as 35 percent for some individual blocks of vines. This is due to a scorching, record-breaking heat wave with temperatures up to 117 degrees over the Labor Day weekend. In its wake, many winemakers were left with plenty of shriveled grapes and worries about both quality and quantity.

Goodbye to Lodi’s Old Vine Zin?
Lodi has long been known for its majestic old vine zinfandel vineyards and amazing zinfandel wines. However, that may soon be changing. The Lodi Winegrape Commission reports high costs of labor and other market influences have pushed many growers to pull out their old vine zinfandel vines and replace them with cabernet sauvignon, petite sirah and sauvignon blanc.
UC Davis Researcher Recognized

Controlling diseases spread by various vectors is an ongoing challenge for growers. An outbreak of Pierce’s disease, for example, can wipe out vines in an entire region. UC Davis has been a key partner with growers in that effort. Patch.com reports that Frank Zalom, UC Davis distinguished professor of entomology, is the recipient of USDA’s 2017 B.Y. Morrison Medal. He is the first entomologist to receive the annual award. Recently, Zalom identified the vector of grapevine red blotch virus in vineyards as a treehopper. That research now opens the door to the possibility of developing a management approach to control the spread of the virus.

›› ARTICLE LINK: UC Davis professor recognized with coveted national award

Winegrape Harvest in Sonoma County

Ask any winegrape grower to describe the grape harvest in Sonoma County and you typically hear “harvest time is like a marathon.” The 2017 harvest has taken off like a sprint and the pace shows no sign of letting up. August delivered some of the longest, hottest periods seen in years, which caused heat stress. In some appellations, it became too hot for too long, causing sugars to rapidly increase. The other primary challenge facing Sonoma County winegrape growers is the availability of labor. While there is not a critical shortage this season, it is clear that there is a limited supply with more workers needed, especially in the coming years. The Sonoma Valley Winegrape Commission provides monthly harvest updates on its website.

›› LINK: Sonoma County Wine Growers 2017 harvest updates

Vineyards Replaced by Urban Encroachment

California vineyards are often targeted for development. The Inland Valley Daily Bulletin reports on a Rancho Cucamonga grape grower who may be harvesting for the last time. “Every vine is pruned. It’s a full hand-harvest of the fruit,” said Don Galleano, the third-generation winemaker whose Galleano Winery would turn the grapes into wine. The vineyard is likely to be uprooted, however. The property is slated for development.

›› ARTICLE LINK: One last harvest in Rancho Cucamonga

Viognier and Gewürztraminer – in Monterey?

Thanks to the cooling air of its bay, Monterey’s is a mild growing season, with lower soil temperatures and without much rainfall, that allows grapes to ripen slowly, at a steady pace. UC Davis classifies the area’s climate as comparable to prime pinot and chardonnay regions like Sonoma and Burgundy. However, the San Francisco Chronicle reports that by embracing obscure varietals, a new generation of ambitious Monterey vintners are crafting wines that are redefining the region’s terroir.

›› ARTICLE LINK: Monterey vintners redefine by embracing obscure varietals