Cap-and-Trade Dollars Help Prevent Wildfires

Only 10 months after the devastating wine country fires, Mendocino, Lake, Sonoma, Solano, Colusa and Glenn counties are again experiencing historic fires. The Mendocino Complex fire, after burning more than 300,000 acres, is the largest fire in California history.

California will grant more than $170 million in cap-and-trade funds to local governments and organizations to prevent fires and improve the health of forests. The money will go toward fire prevention education programs and projects such as cutting back flammable vegetation – activities that might stop, or at least dull, the intensity of future fires.

The U.S. Wine Industry’s Achilles Heal: Labor

Finding ways to adapt to a world with changing labor market conditions is perhaps wine’s greatest current challenge. We saw several aspects of the evolving labor crisis during a July visit to the Napa Valley where Mike Veseth, editor of The Wine Economist, spoke at the California Association of Winegrape Growers Summer Conference.

Many U.S. industries are struggling to cope with labor issues today. Agriculture, including winegrapes, struggles a bit more because of the traditional labor-intensive model and the relatively short half-life of freshly-harvested goods compared with manufactured products.

Winegrape Growers Gearing Up For Harvest

Known as the onset of ripening, veraison marks the colorful transition from grape growing to grape ripening, resulting in several changes in fruit development. In veraison, grapes not only change color but also begin to increase in weight, volume and sugar content.

“Reports of veraison are starting to come in,” says Brittany Pederson, director of viticulture at Renteria Vineyard Management and a NVG member. Coastal temperatures that were to average in the high 80s to mid-90s were expected to prompt veraison at a steady rate.
**New Faculty – Viticulture and Enology**

Research is vital to the wine industry as science develops and the industry evolves with that science. The industry is proud to support that research through direct and substantial contributions to both UC and CSU and through research funded by grower assessments.

The Fresno State Department of Viticulture and Enology is experiencing new energy these days, with new professors joining the faculty. The department’s newest faculty member is Dr. Luca Brillante, a viticulture professor and Bronco Wine Co. viticulture research chair. Brillante, who earned his doctorate in 2014 at the University of Burgundy, completed post doctorate work at UC Davis this summer. >> ARTICLE

**China’s New Tariffs Could Cripple Industry**

The trade war with China threatens to derail long-running efforts by winemakers to expand into the Chinese market. That could carry repercussions well into the future.

“We not only face the prospect of short-term harm to winegrape prices, but really missing out on the longer-term opportunity,” said CAWG President John Aguirre. “Once you lose market share, other countries have filled that void and it’s very difficult to reclaim lost ground.” >> ARTICLE

**Wine Industry Supports Cancer Research**

The wine industry has a long history of being active members of our communities and helping to fund vital efforts that address various areas of need. The V Foundation for Cancer Research raised a record-breaking $18 million at its 20th annual Wine Celebration held Aug. 2-5. The event raised nearly $2 million for breast cancer research and over $16 million in fund-a-need donations to support the V Foundation’s endowment fund.

This year’s event brings the total amount the V Foundation’s Napa Valley Wine Celebration has raised in 20 years to more than $100 million. >> ARTICLE

**Is Picardan the Next Great White Wine?**

What’s your favorite wine? There are 1,368 grape varietals in the world, but most Americans drink wine made from just about 20 different types. But now a small group of winemakers is hoping an old-but-new variety joins that elite group.

Picardan, an obscure white wine grape originating in the Rhône wine region in southeastern France, is experiencing an American renaissance of sorts after almost going extinct. Even though it is one of the 13 certified grapes permitted for the Châteauneuf-du-Pape appellation, there was just a little more than an acre of picardan planted around the world – until recently. >> ARTICLE