

Mendocino County C.E.O. Report

April. 2025.

Christopher Chen Ph.D.,
Integrated Vineyard Systems Advisor

Recent activities of the University of California Cooperative Extension (UCCE) North Coast Viticulture program include events and resources designed to improve the information available to and utilized by grape growers in Mendocino County. Notable events which occurred since the start of 2025 are monthly breakfast meetings for locally-licensed Pest Control Advisors and QAL holders; these events are free to our stakeholders with one of the aforementioned licenses and provide Department of Pesticide Regulation Continuing Education Units. We are also organizing a large-scale field day in conjunction with other UCCE programs; this will be the “UCCE Olive and Grape Field Day” occurring in the Hopland area later this summer. Our program also assists with local events such as Pinot Fest in Anderson Valley. Within the past year, stakeholder participation in UCCE events has increased by 123% when compared with 2023 and overall event offerings have increased by 44%. This describes an increasing interest in CE events in Mendocino County. UCCE clientele have been particularly interested in topics related to weathering poor wine and grape markets. The North Coast Viticulture Extension Program remains a valuable partner and source of information for grape producers throughout Mendocino County. Resources for improved vineyard management practices have been continuously developed and made publicly available online at <https://ucanr.edu/sites/chenlab/>. The uploaded resources are available for use by any UCCE clientele and are available for download online.

Having completed a grant-funded study in 2024 related to drought recovery of rootstocks, research efforts have been renewed in the past year to address new concerns brought about by poor markets and environmental risks. Two studies related to abiotic stress avoidance or tolerance are in development and include an assessment of smoke risk to vineyards during prescribed burns and reductions in berry shrivel under extreme heat. Additional studies have been proposed and are under consideration including an assessment of techniques for “mothballing” vineyards during periods of poor markets.

UCCE North Coast Viticulture continues to listen to our clientele in Mendocino County and adjust our programmatic offerings accordingly. In addition to self-determined events, we collaborate regularly with other organizations to increase the educational opportunities available to grape growers in the region. This extends to other counties where we are always sure to invite Mendocino grape growers to all events we offer. It has been a pleasure to work with the wine and grape communities of Mendocino County. I look forward to building more mutually beneficial relationships.