

VQA Ontario – News and Tips — November 2016

LATE HARVEST AND ICEWINE GRAPE REGISTRATION – NOVEMBER 15 DEADLINE

Grapes left on the vine beyond November 15 that are destined for Late Harvest Wines or Icewines must be registered with VQA Ontario. This is done online via VQA Ontario's secure website at <https://office.vqaontario.ca/vqaservices>. You must also ensure that these grapes are entered in the GGO eGrape system and have a weigh slip associated with them. All entries will be reconciled with GGO to identify reporting discrepancies. Detailed information about icewine and late harvest registration can be found at <http://www.vqaontario.ca/Regulations/Processes> under the Late Harvest/Icewine tab.

All registrations are due on November 15, 2016 and no registrations will be accepted after midnight on that date.

If you do not have an online account or cannot access your account, please contact us as soon as possible. Please forward this information to growers who are registering grapes on your behalf!

VQA WINE RESEARCH PROJECT – CAN YOU HELP US BY PROVIDING SAMPLES?

VQA Ontario is continuing its long-term research project to increase our knowledge about VQA wines. The research will collect information on vineyard conditions and practices, winemaking techniques and the chemical and sensory attributes of the wines we make. The aim of the project is to better understand all the variables that affect VQA wines, how they relate to the wine in the glass and perhaps identify similarities and differences across our appellations.

We are looking for volunteer winemakers who would be willing to provide samples of specific wines (finished or almost finished) and answer some questions about the viticultural and winemaking practices that produced the wine. Specifically, the wine would be part of your normal commercial production, a single variety, single vintage from a specific appellation (perhaps pre-blending), and you would be able to donate one case or one 19.5 L stainless keg) for future testing.

Over a multi-year period we hope to find out if there are common practices that have developed in each appellation and see if there is any correlation to the physical conditions (soil, climate etc.) and/or the character of the wine. Please rest assured that there is no desire or plan to restrict your winemaking decisions or practices. Winemakers participating in the study will be encouraged to make the wines following their usual winemaking and commercial objectives. The samples should be reflective of what would be available to a consumer.

We will start with the core varieties of Riesling, Chardonnay, Cabernet Franc and Pinot Noir with coverage of as many appellations as possible. Where wines are not available from the 2016 vintage, we will add them next year. If you are interested, you could provide any number of samples – eg the same varietal made by you from different appellations, or different varietals from a single appellation.

Please contact me by October 15 if you are willing to participate for the 2016 vintage with a list of what you might be able to provide, including the variety and vineyard location. We understand that the list might be flexible and change as the vintage progresses so we are just looking for possibilities at this point. We will follow up and confirm in the new year.

We hope that the data collected from this project will help you continue to make world class wines from Ontario's appellations – and help us explain the special value that comes from their origin.

BENEFITS OF MEMBERSHIP: PARTICIPATION IN VQA LEVERAGES THE VQA WINES OF ONTARIO PROMOTION

As a producer of VQA appellation wines, you benefit from the marketing efforts of the Wine Marketing Association of Ontario. WMAO supports VQA wines with a \$5 million integrated marketing campaign aimed at wine consumers in Ontario and markets across Canada and the world. The VQA Wines of Ontario brand is featured in advertising, in-store promotion, events, tourism and media and public relations campaigns. For more information on WMAO's programs and support for marketing your VQA wines, see www.winecountryontario.ca.

ONTARIO WINE AND GRAPE INDUSTRY PERFORMANCE STUDY – ACTIVE NOW

Your winery should have recently received an emailed invitation to participate in the second annual Ontario Wine and Grape Performance Study. The Ontario government requires you to complete this survey if your company receives or intends to receive funding under the VQA Wine Support Program or the Marketing and Vineyard Improvement Program.

The invitation was sent to the individual identified during last year's survey as most likely to be responsible for the financial data required. Please check your inbox and let us know if you have any questions.

The completed survey is due no later than Friday, December 9th.

For more information on the survey, please see the 2016 edition of the report at <http://www.vqaontario.ca/AboutVQA/News#News> .

TIPS FOR THE MONTH

ACCOUNT MANAGEMENT

Many critical VQA activities are managed online, including wine approvals, transfers, Icewine registration and membership. Please keep your login information for the VQA Services online account secure and personal. If you have multiple users, each user should have his or her own login credentials and password. Not only does sharing login information compromise the security of your information but if two people sign on at the same time with the same login information, the system will hang and cause significant delays.

Keep your contact information up to date and your staff roster current. When winery staff or ownership changes, you need to ensure access to your account is properly transferred and passwords changed as appropriate. Each winery can designate its own administrative authority to control access to its own account and we encourage you to have a plan to ensure continued access if your single employee leaves.

VQA Ontario requires that a primary contact be designated in our online membership management system. This is the person we will contact if:

- Someone not registered on the account contacts us to set up access
- There is a consumer complaint about your wine or winery
- There is an investigation into a VQA compliance issue or a product recall

At least one person registered on the online account must be qualified to take responsibility for the membership (an owner, officer or director of the company). You may delegate day to day responsibility but a senior person must sign on at least annually to apply for the membership renewal.

NO TASTINGS IN DECEMBER

The VQA tasting panel does not operate in the month of December and it is often very busy in the last week of November.

If you need wines approved before the new year, try to get your samples in early – before middle of November is best. Samples are handled on a first-in basis but we may limit the number of wines a single producer can submit to ensure everyone has some access. Don't hesitate to give us a call if you need help with the process. Regular tastings resume on the first Monday after January 1, 2017. Also note that the last intake date in 2016 for samples for full lab analysis will be approximately mid-December. More information on the schedule will be posted on the sidebar of VQA Ontario's secure website as it becomes available.

If you have an unexpected and urgent need to get a wine approved in December such as a stock out or last minute order, please contact us as early as possible to see if an emergency tasting can be arranged. In the past, we have occasionally been able to convene an ad-hoc tasting panel subject to panelist availability.