

VQA Ontario — News & Tips — October 2015

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/vgaservices>. 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, 2015 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!

MAKE SURE YOUR GRAPES REMAIN VQA-ELIGIBLE

All grapes for VQA wines must:

- Be on the list of authorized varieties
- Meet the minimum Brix requirement for the specific variety
- Be documented with a grape weigh slip from GGO (eGrape)
- For grapes dried after harvest, both Brix at harvest (from GGO) and Brix after drying (from McKibbon Assoc) is required

As you are harvesting and buying grapes, make sure that you get and keep the documentation required to verify your wines are eligible for VQA approval. You will need a GGO weigh slip record for all grapes used in VQA wines.

If you purchase juice from a processor, you will need a copy of the weigh slip for the grapes the juice was made from. If you harvest grapes for table wine after November 15, follow the GGO procedures and make sure Brix testing is conducted and a weigh slip is created.

There are special procedures for Icewine and Late Harvest juice, which must be registered separately with both GGO and VQAO as noted above. Be careful what you purchase - Icewine or juice that is not properly documented in VQAO's registration system is not eligible for VQA certification.

When do I need a VQA wine transfer form? If you purchase bulk wine, the seller must complete a transfer form using VQAO's online wine transfer system. Bulk wine must be purchased from a VQA winery if you wish it to be VQA-eligible. Wine purchased from a non-VQA winery is not audited and therefore not eligible for VQA certification. Grapes or juice of a vintage year that have not been documented by winery audit on the premises of a VQA winery by August 31 of the following year are not eligible for use in VQA wines.

Lastly, don't forget to check that the grapes used in your blends meet the minimum brix requirement for the grape variety and appellation you intend to use on the label.

INDUSTRY SURVEY COMING SOON

Starting October 30th, watch your in-box for your invitation to participate in the Ontario Wine Industry Performance Study. VQA Ontario and Deloitte are conducting this survey on behalf of the wine and grape industry as part of the Ontario Government's Wine and Grape Strategy. It will measure key performance metrics for wineries and growers and be a valuable tool for identifying opportunities to maximize your business performance.

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. Rest assured, VQA Ontario will keep all individual responses confidential and they will not be shared with other organizations nor will they be used for any purpose except to prepare a report on the industry using relevant aggregate statistics.

The survey will be launched on October 30th and must be completed by Friday December 11, 2015.

TIP OF THE MONTH

Plan Ahead

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, 2016. Also note that the last intake date in 2015 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.