

## VQA Ontario — News & Tips — October 2016

### 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 fully documented by Grape Growers Ontario (eGrape system)
- For grapes dried after harvest, both Brix at harvest (from GGO) and Brix after drying (from McKibbon Assoc) is required
- For Icewine, registered in both GGO and VQAO online systems

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 weight and brix record for all grapes used in VQA wines.

If you purchase juice from a processor, you will need a copy of the GGO information 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 GGO record 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.

If you are submitting a wine for approval that you purchased in bulk, the entire volume must be on-site at your winery at the time the approval application is made. VQA approvals will not be granted based on a prospective purchase of bulk wine. Wineries should also be mindful of AGCO requirements when purchasing bulk wine.

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 28th, watch your in-box for your invitation to participate in the second annual 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 measures key performance metrics for wineries and growers and is intended to help you identify 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. As with the previous survey, 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 28th and must be completed by Friday December 9, 2016.

### BENEFITS OF MEMBERSHIP: VQA PARTICIPATION SUPPORTS YOUR BOTTOM LINE

“In an industry with incredibly tight margins, purchases that don’t provide a valuable return simply don’t get made. The fact that 160 Ontario wineries invest in VQA membership tells you that this is a purchase that provides significant value.” Ed Madronich, Flat Rock Cellars

Studies in the United States show that appellation status (eg. a regulated viticultural area on the label versus just “California”) typically adds 45% to the price of a wine. In Ontario, VQA wines sell for an average of \$7 more than domestically produced non-VQA wines. With a conservative appellation premium of \$2 per bottle, VQA membership, approval and sales fees are fully recouped with the sale of about 50 cases of wine. Considering the additional benefits that government extends to VQA-certified wines, it takes just 24 cases of licensee sales of a wine with a retail value of \$20 to recoup your full cost of participating in VQA.

### TIP OF THE MONTH

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#### Planning Ahead Makes Everything Easier

Wineries should normally build 2-3 weeks into production planning for processing VQA wine approvals. However, we understand that bottling schedules, stock outs and the like can sometimes upset your plans and we will do our best to expedite when requested. If you want to make a special request that is outside of our normal processes, for example a rush for lab testing, please call the VQA office before doing anything else. Most of these requests need to be pre-arranged with LCBO by VQA staff. Sending samples that are not confirmed or expected most often results in further delays.

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. If you submit 10 or 20 wines at once, they will be metered through the process. Please prioritize! And don’t hesitate to give us a call if you have questions or need help. 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.