



### BRIX TESTING FOR GRAPES THAT WILL BE DRIED BEFORE FERMENTATION

There appears to be increasing interest in drying grapes before fermentation for either making Vin de Cure or for blending with table wines.

Please note that an independent brix test must be conducted at the time of harvest and after drying, immediately prior to fermentation. This is because VQA Ontario must verify that the grapes meet harvest minimums and must also check that the alcohol and residual sugar are reasonable in comparison to the brix at the start of fermentation. Please contact Errol McKibbin directly for both brix measurements.

The rules regarding wines made wholly or partially from dried grapes are currently under review. A proposal may be circulated for comment sometime in 2011 but if you have any views on this issue that you would like to share in advance, please contact Laurie Macdonald at the VQA office.

### LATE HARVEST AND ICEWINE REGISTRATIONS

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 [www.vqaservices.ca](http://www.vqaservices.ca). You must also ensure that these grapes are entered in the GGO system and have a weigh slip associated with them. This year we will be reconciling entries with GGO to identify reporting discrepancies. More information about registration and harvest reporting can be found at <http://www.vqaontario.ca/Regulations/Processes> under the Late Harvest/Icewine tab.

### VQAO BOARD TO CONDUCT A STRATEGIC REVIEW OF THE WINEMAKING REGULATIONS

The VQA Ontario Board of Directors is undertaking a strategic review of the wine-making regulations. This is intended to be a high level review of the regulations as a whole to determine whether the overall package of what is regulated remains appropriate for the present and future needs of consumers, the wine industry and the appellation system. The review will be conducted within the framework of VQA Ontario's mandate to maintain an appellation system and its long term objective to make appellation a guiding factor in consumers' choice of VQA wine. Some of the general issues to be discussed will be the balance between content and process rules and outcomes testing, the use of terminology, the regulation of packaging, grape inputs and wine categories. It is the Board's view that – in addition to considering individual requests for change - the package of regulations that make up the VQA standard should be reviewed periodically to ensure its components work together towards the overall goals of the system. This process will be started in November 2010 and continue into 2011. Any changes contemplated will be subject to a formal consultation process but comments are welcome at any time.

## REMINDERS!

### NEW APPLICATION FEES FOR WINE APPROVALS TAKE EFFECT OCTOBER 1

Effective **October 1, 2010**, the application and testing fee for wine approvals will increase by \$25.00 to \$235.00 (plus HST). The Wine Approvals System (WAS) server will be offline for approximately 20 minutes at the beginning of the business day on October 1 to effect these changes.

This fee increase completes the process begun in 2007 to move to full cost recovery for wine approval fees. The new fee represents the actual expense incurred by VQA Ontario for services performed under contract by LCBO including the tasting, chemical analysis and label review. In the past, VQA Ontario has charged fees that are less than the expenses associated with the approvals testing. These additional costs were absorbed by drawing down VQA Ontario's surplus funds and resulted in an operating deficit for several years. Now that the level of surplus funds is diminished, fee levels will be adjusted to reflect the actual cost of the approvals service. It is VQA Ontario's intention to maintain this program on a cost recovery basis and future supplier fee increases will be passed along to wineries with appropriate notice.

### FULL IMPLEMENTATION OF NEW LABELLING RULES FOR THE 2010 VINTAGE

Labelling rules were updated in 2008 to require that the appellation of origin appear in letters at least 2 mm high on the **principal display panel** of all VQA wines. The principal display panel is the label that would normally be considered to be the front label by a consumer. The "back" label cannot be deemed to be the principal display panel for the purpose of this rule. Wineries that had previously approved labels in use with the appellation on the back label were given an extended period to complete the transition to the new rules. This transition period ends with the 2009 vintage. All wines bearing a vintage date of 2010 or later must show the appellation declaration on the principal display panel with sufficient contrast so that it is easily visible. There will be no exceptions or grandfathering to this rule.

Please ensure that your label design for all 2010 wines reflects the appellation requirements so that you can avoid label failures or costly reprinting.

## DID YOU KNOW.....

Average mean temperatures for 2010 were higher than normal for 6 out of 8 of the first 8 months of 2010 across most of Ontario. The growing season months of May, July and August saw average mean temperatures 2 to 3 degrees above normal with generally drier but not droughty conditions. Although there were a few spring frost issues in some viticultural areas, the season has been exceptionally promising so far. No pressure for winemakers of course but the stage has been set for another great vintage.

VQA Ontario □ Ontario's Wine Authority □ [www.vqaontario.ca](http://www.vqaontario.ca)  
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