

VQA ONTARIO
Ontario's Wine Appellation Authority
NEWS & TIPS APRIL 2020

OPERATIONS UPDATE

At this time the VQAO offices are closed to the public but we continue to operate the tasting panels and with staff otherwise working from home. We are all available by phone or email, 8 AM to 4:30 PM to answer any questions any might have. Mail is being collected regularly but be advised that courier packages cannot be delivered.

LAB AND TASTING

At this time, the LCBO laboratory is operating at reduced capacity but giving VQA samples priority. At present, we do not anticipate any delays. Please continue to be mindful of the number of samples you are sending and stagger them over multiple weeks if possible. Any priority samples (for a bottling date or stock-out) need not be staggered.

Tastings are being held once per week, normally on a Wednesday. Samples received at the LCBO before 10 am Monday will normally be included in the Wednesday tasting. Please continue to send all of your samples directly to LCBO but please note that they are only accepting samples Monday-Thursday from 9 AM – 3PM. Please ensure your samples arrive within this window.

THANK YOU FOR RENEWING YOUR MEMBERSHIP!

Many thanks to our members for renewing their VQA memberships on time.

For those of you who have not yet renewed, please note that your membership has expired (effective April 1, 2020) and your online account has been set to "inactive" status – access to online services has been discontinued and no wine approval applications will be accepted, or results issued. Please login and renew by going to the "edit profile" tab if you wish to continue your VQA membership.

For those of you who have renewed online but not yet paid, please note that payment is due by June 30, 2020 and your membership will be terminated at that time if no payment is received. Bylaw provisions related to resigned members will apply.

For wineries that discontinue their membership, approved VQA wines may be sold for up to 12 months after the membership ends using VQA regulated terms. After that grace period, all VQA terms must be removed from labels, and any descriptions of the wines or winery.

TRACEABILITY AND LOT CODES - JULY 2020

New federal regulations take effect July 2020. VQA Ontario requires lot codes on all non-vintage wines and will accept any format of lot code that is acceptable under the new federal regulations.

The following information was provided to us by [Wine Growers Canada \(WGC\)](#):

Under the new Safe Food for Canadians Regulations (SFCR) all wine that is imported, exported or is sold across provincial/territorial borders or retail will require traceability documents effective July 15, 2020. These documents must indicate the following:

Identify the food:

- Common name of the food provided
- Lot code to allow for the food to be traced
- Name and principal place of business by whom or for whom, the food was manufactured, prepared, produced, stored, packaged or labelled the food

Trace the food one step back:

- Name and address of the person who provided you with the food
- Date you were provided the food

Trace the food one step forward:

- Name and address of the person to whom you provided the food
- Date you provided the food

Clear and readable records are to be maintained for two years, be accessible in Canada, and provided to CFIA upon request. Where electronic records are used, they need to be provided in a single file and in a format that can easily be opened and used in standard commercial software.

Traceability guidelines can be found on the CFIA website.

[Main page for traceability](#)

[Regulatory requirements](#)

Under the Safe Food for Canadians Regulations (SFCR) a lot code or a unique identifier (lot code if it is a consumer prepackaged food not packaged at retail) will be required.

CFIA regulations also do not define what is considered a “readily discernible”, lot code. To address this, CFIA will be developing guidance for the industry to better understand and comply and will be published alongside the final regulatory test.

MONTHLY SALES REPORTS – NO MORE PRINTED COPIES PLEASE

If you are not yet uploading your sales and still mailing them to VQA, this is the last month they will be accepted. Any reports that are submitted in hard copy will be rejected beginning with the April 2020 monthly reporting period. If you need help with this feature, please contact us.