



VQA ONTARIO NEWS & TIPS – DECEMBER 2018

IMPORTANT DEADLINES AND REMINDERS

NO TASTINGS IN DECEMBER – LAB SHUTDOWN OVER HOLIDAYS

The VQA tasting panel does not operate in the month of December and therefore new applications for wine approval will not be tasted until the panel reconvenes in January. Regular VQA tastings will resume on Wednesday, January 2, 2019.

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.

The laboratory will shut down for annual maintenance for two weeks beginning December 17. This means that the last intake for full lab analysis will be December 7, 2018 for testing the following week. The lab will resume normal operations on Wednesday, January 2, 2019. Once normal operations resume, remember that you need to get your samples in by noon on a Wednesday to have them in the testing lineup the following week.

You may continue to submit samples during December but keep in mind they will be held at the LCBO in room temperature storage until regular testing resumes.

DEADLINE – DECEMBER 7 – ONTARIO WINE AND GRAPE INDUSTRY PERFORMANCE STUDY

Don't forget – if you applied for (or intend to apply for) funding, you must participate in the study by submitting a completed survey. **The deadline to submit your survey online is Friday Dec. 7th.** Need help? Contact [Katherina Radcliffe](#).

DEADLINE – DECEMBER 15 – REGULATORY CHANGE CONSULTATIONS

VQAO is consulting on 4 proposed regulatory changes. Your feedback is important to help us make an informed decision. Please send your comments on all or any of these proposals by **December 15, 2018**.

A detailed description of the proposals and background is included in the attachment and can also be found on our website at <http://www.vqaontario.ca/Resources/Industry>

In brief, they are:

1. Add Marquette to the list of permitted hybrid grape varieties.
2. Expand the list of permitted grape varieties for use in wines labelled with “Ontario” origin to include all wine grape varieties that do not have significant labrusca lineage or characteristics. General rules related to hybrid content will still apply.
3. Allow the production of table wines labelled with “Ontario” origin to omit the vintage date on the label, allowing content to be a blend of vintages and making declaring the vintage date on the label optional.
4. Change VQA Ontario's corporate name from the Vintners Quality Alliance Ontario to the Ontario Wine Appellation Authority. No changes to VQA consumer-facing brand or labelling requirements.

These changes are not yet approved. Once industry feedback is received, the VQA Ontario Board of Directors will consider whether to approve the changes as proposed or revised and recommend them to the Minister of Government and Consumer Services for approval. Please note that, once recommended, the government conducts its own review and consultation.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Katherina Radcliffe or Laurie Macdonald at the VQA Ontario office.

LATE HARVEST AND ICEWINE GRAPE REGISTRATION – ENTER YOUR HARVEST INFORMATION

Don't forget to record all your harvest data when you harvest grapes for Icewine and late harvest and enter this information into VQA Ontario's online Icewine monitoring registry at <https://office.vqaontario.ca/vqaservices>.

IMS has been recently changed, specifically the way harvest and pressing data information is entered. The recordings have been divided into 3 tabs: Harvest, First Pressing and Second Pressing. You will enter your harvest information first, recording the date, time, ambient temperature at harvest, actual (weighed) tonnes and the volume of the juice. Pressing data will be entered after the harvest data under the newly added “First Pressing” tab. If there is a subsequent pressing of the same grapes, then this would be entered under the “Second Pressing”. If there are more than 3 pressings, group the Icewine juice under the “First Pressing” and the late harvest juice under “Second Pressing”.

Don't forget, you will need the brix reading as tested by McKibbon and Associates.

If you are having any difficulties using this new system, please don't hesitate to contact the VQA office for assistance. More information can be found at <http://www.vqaontario.ca/Regulations/Processes> under the Late Harvest/Icewine tab.

REVISED RULES FOR APPROVALS

VQA Ontario has made changes to the Rules made under clauses 5 (1) (d) and (e) of the VQA Act that govern processes to issue approvals for the use of VQA terms, descriptions and designations. These changes result from a review to ensure consistency between the Rules and the processes implemented by the LCBO in providing testing services. The updates to the Rules increase clarity and transparency in

the application process, ensure consistency in the tasting panel methodology, and clarify the distinction between post-approval audits and Quality Assurance Reviews (QARs). The changes do not affect the requirements for wineries to obtain or maintain VQA Ontario approval for their wines or the practical aspects of the application process.

The revised Rules can be found at <http://www.vqaontario.ca/Regulations/Standards>. For more information, please contact [Laurie Macdonald](#).

MONTHLY SALES REPORTING

Previously, when uploading monthly sales reports, wineries would enter the total litres sold and upload the LCBO Excel file or a .pdf file containing an image of the LCBO Excel file. VQA would then verify the litres on the uploaded report match the litres entered by the winery. If they match, VQA would “Accept” the record and an invoice is created.

This process has been streamlined for wineries uploading a “.xls” file (the same Excel file that is emailed to the LCBO). The litres entered are now automatically verified against the .xls file and, if correct, an invoice is generated. No more waiting for VQA to accept (or reject) the report to pay your invoice.

If you are uploading a .pdf file, the manual method of verifying and accepting the Sales Report remains the same. For more information please contact [Barbara Dodds](#).

HAPPY HOLIDAYS from VQA ONTARIO

The VQA Ontario office will be closed on Dec 24 and reopen on Wednesday January 2, 2019. We wish all of you a happy and safe holiday season.