OCPVA October 2025 Newsletter

August Membership Meeting Updates

At the meeting, which was held at Autumn Lake Winery on August 26th at 6:00 PM, there were several important topics discussed from the possibility of a communications intern from Rutgers, to a social media manager, to the NJ Terroir Showcase. Read the entire August minutes HERE.

Several fine examples of Exciting White Wines were shared and discussed. There was even an example of a Unionville 2010 Chardonnay graciously donated by Orley Ashenfelder! Thanks to Autumn Lake for hosting and to all who shared their interesting white wines.

Follow Up:

Dr Joseph Stanzione, who runs the glass recycling project at Rowan and who spoke at the November meeting, is still seeking more wineries to participate in their glass recycling and research project. The idea is that winery participants can save money on wine bottles while reducing their carbon footprint. Joe can be reached at stanzione@rowan.edu for more details.

October Board Meeting: Topics: (Geo Mapping & Social Media)

A meeting of the board was held early in October at Bellview Winery to discuss the possibilities of **"Geo Mapping"** and the possible benefits it could bring by creating a complete list of vineyards in the Garden State with GeoMark Consulting. Having this complete list would benefit the industry regarding grant funding and gaining exposure as a viable growing region. More on this in the future.

Also at this meeting, Megan Hernandez was present to make a case for the OCPVA to embrace professional social media help. The rules and tendencies of social media are in constant state of change so what worked well last year will be obsolete today. Megan has the pulse of the social media segment and can keep the OCPVA in front of prospective customers. Even if you are a grower and not a winery this is exceptionally important. If the wineries are not selling wine, they are also not buying fruit.

SAVE THE DATE!!!

- The **NJ Ag Convention** is being held **January 20-22nd 2026** in Atlantic City. This show gets larger each year with more exhibits and educational ag-related seminars. Many of the seminars are geared directly to vineyard agriculture. Keep an eye out for the latest.
- The ***Eastern Winery Expo*** is being held for the first time at the **Greater Richmond Convention Center in Richmond, Virginia, on March 24-26, 2026!** to register HERE. Use code 26CPVA when registering to receive a 10% discount. Registration opens: November 5, 2025.
- **NJ State Grant** season is coming up and there are requests for research projects that can be funded. Projects can be anything that is vineyard-related like canopy management, soil composition, fruit thinning techniques or weed control. Ideas for topics for research project should be submitted to Kelly within the next few months.
- The third issue of the OCPVA advertising campaign with **Edible Jersey Magazine** (Holiday/Winter Issue) is coming up and suggestions for topics from membership are welcome! To date the topics highlighted were Coeur d'Est (Summer Issue) and the Terrior Showcase (Fall Issue). Any ideas will be considered. Please submit ideas to Kelly. Check out Edible Jersey Magazine recent issues or subscribe HERE.

Articles

- Artificial Intelligence is the newest buzz across all industries and agriculture has not been left out. Robots in the vineyards and mapping tools for insect or fungus pressure are on the market now and many more are in testing phase. At some point, it will become affordable to the masses. Read how some west coast vineyards are tracking plant health in real time HERE

- A new, autonomous vineyard robot is in the works and being developed and tested in Italy. It is said that the robot can map its surroundings, manipulate shoots and clusters, and apply treatments. More capabilities are in research and development now. An interesting article can be viewed HERE.

- In NY at Cornell, another type of autonomous unit is gaining traction and recognition as it scouts vineyards for fungal disease. The word is that it is as good a human scout and completes the work four times faster. It uses cameras to scan the canopies, and AI compares the images to databases to pinpoint trouble spots. Read the original post HERE.

- Research is complete and actual units are in use in California that use UV-C light to eliminate powdery mildew from the vineyard. With chemical costs rising and EPA bans looming, this machine may have a place in the commercial vineyard. It should be noted that it offers no protection from PM, only eradication. More about this machine .HERE

- Rutgers is offering Spanish for Agriculture to help connect farm operators to the Spanish speaking farm hands. It is not always a simple matter of English communication for the operator to get a clear message across so knowing some additional Spanish that is related to farming may be a help. The details are listed HERE.

- An interesting take on the wine industry and how the consumer may view the industry, **"7 Reasons It's a Miricle Anyone Gets Interested in Wine"**, urges the wine community to simplify, demystify, and de-snob wine. The article cites barriers to new wine drinkers surrounding the beverage. The full article is available HERE .

- An ad for concrete vineyard posts may be of some interest to the group. These concrete posts have been used in Italy for decades and have stood up to time better than any wood post and most metals. Concrete posts have been documented to last for over 50 years and can stand up to machine harvest. There are lots of options available for connectors, wire hangers and other configurations aside from VSP. They are now being manufactured on the west coast. Search the internet for concrete vineyard posts to learn more.

Wires, Lasers, Satellites, and Digital Cameras

Certainly, you have noticed a common thread in the current newsletter. Agricultural automation is here and that industry is growing exponentially and in leaps and bounds and vineyards have not been left out. It all sounds too good to be true, and maybe it is. After all, small vineyards probably make up 75% of all US vineyards with the median size being 15 acres and the average US vineyard encompassing upwards of 80 acres. How can a small vineyard take advantage of all this new, high-powered, and very expensive technology? Good question...

One can envision how this technology can be applied directly and instantly to a vineyard simply by watching a video, reading a few paragraphs, or participating in local demonstrations. Dreams of labor-saving hours and precise documentation sent directly to a tablet at the farm office ensue. After all, there is a shortage of willing, affordable labor. Then, one must consider the ICE raids if one's ducks are not all properly aligned. And do not forget the ease of use of all that data being neatly prepared and deposited right on the desktop. A convenient copy located only seconds away in the cloud stands at beckon call for remote access to all that data. It is all quite compelling but maybe it is too good to be true.

To state the obvious, vineyard work is hard work; there are times I wish a solution would drop from the heavens and bless us with hands-free shoot thinning or auto PM scouting. I'll admit I'd be happy to adopt technology to scan a leaf with a tronic gismo and find out the nutritional deficiencies and then present an NPK plan in tons per acre that I could upload into my new GPS spreader; all done before I walk to the end of that row.

I can envision becoming dependent on this sort of technology and if it is working, there is nothing better or more accurate. This sort of dependency is nothing new. I'll tell you a quick story to demonstrate.

A friend and I were going to the shore to go fishing one day. My friend was driving. We were headed to my boat in Ocean City, NJ. It is a 36-mile ride. We both had made this ride a thousand times. Before embarking on the journey, my friend puts the address of our destination into his phone and within seconds it pops up on the dash and then Bluetooth makes the audio go to his ear plugs. I queried, "what's up with the GPS? Don't you remember how to get there?" HE said he did but wanted to know where the police were sitting so he wouldn't get a ticket. I asked, "are you planning on speeding?" he answered no. But he also needed to know where the heavy traffic may be located so he could ask to have an alternate route planned, claiming we could save a 'few minutes. I thought to myself, it used to be such a pleasure to simply sit myself in my vehicle and listen to some music for an hour all alone on this very route. Technology has

suckered my friend into believing it is all necessary and now has become a requirement to travel well-known paths barely crossing county boundaries! We didn't catch any fish.

I can recite my house phone number, my wife's phone number and the number where I grew 60 years ago. But that's it! My phone has ruined my memory because all the info is right there. I am now, officially dependent on my phone and the technology that it possesses. Long ago, I could remember dozens of phone numbers and how to get to every location I had ever been to at least one time! Soon, I'll need guidance to get to the local Wawa!

I kind of like my scouting time in the vineyard. When the world goes berserk and there is no sense of order, (usually around 2:15 to 2:30) I can retreat to the vineyard for some quiet time where everything makes sense. There is always something to see or look for or take note of. (Admittedly, I put those notes in my phone!)

I can see a lot of good in the advancements made with regard to agriculture and technology, but I believe it will be a select few who can maximize the potential of it. A new breed of farmer, if you will. The user will need to be tech-savvy. The user will need to know how to use a different set of tools than I am used to. The younger the new user is the better he will manage this technology. He will spend more time at a desk than I do. BUT, he must be prepared when the wires and the satellites and the lasers fail. Hopefully, he can remember the old days when his father used a shovel to make a soil sample. No electric required. Imagine that!

Mark