

VQA News and Tips — September 2016

BRIX MINIMUMS

Don't get caught with a blend that does not meet VQA minimums. A quick reference chart is attached. Make sure you have it handy for harvest and for your cellar staff!

NOTE that the minimum brix for vinifera muscat varieties has changed to 17° for all appellation designations.

GRAPE DOCUMENTATION

VQA regulations require that documentation be provided from GGO on all grapes used in VQA wines. The only acceptable "weigh slip" for VQA purposes is a print out from the e-Grape system administered by GGO. Records must include at least the identity of the grower, vineyard location, grape variety, tonnes, brix (as independently tested) and date of harvest. Please note that handwritten slips or any documentation generated outside of the GGO system are not acceptable. Original e-Grape records are required for all grapes and wines. Grapes that are not registered and tested by GGO by November 15 of the harvest year are not eligible for use in VQA wines.

Wineries that purchase grapes, must or wine from a third party (someone other than the grower of the specific grapes) should ensure they are provided with complete and accurate e-Grape records. Purchases from third parties who are not VQA wineries must be completed and physically on-site at the VQA winery no later than August 31 following the harvest date. The entire content and origin of purchased juice, must or wine must be supported by e-Grape records from the original grower(s). In the case of transfers between VQA wineries, the VQA transfer process must be followed. Wine transferred from a grower, agent or manufacturer that does not hold an AGCO Manufacturers Licence and is not subject to regular VQA audits is not eligible for use in a VQA wine.

BENEFITS OF MEMBERSHIP: VQA MEMBERSHIP SUPPORTS BETTER BRAND PROFILE AND DISTRIBUTION

From enhanced shelving allocation and Vintages eligibility at LCBO stores, to visibility with restaurants that demand wines of origin and exclusive access to the Ontario Farmers' Market channel, VQA certification provides the most direct path to Ontario's engaged wine consumers. For example, during the first year of the VQA Farmer's Market program, consumers bought almost \$1.5 million worth of VQA wines from 78 winery participants.

At the international level, VQA Ontario certification is required by the European Union for access to its member states and continues to be recognized by a growing number of world markets as a standard for access and streamlined entry.

“To grow as a winery, you’ve got to think far beyond the cellar door. VQA certification gets our product into more hands, provincially, nationally and internationally, and that’s a critical factor in continued growth for us.” *Walter Schmoranz, Pelee Island Winery*

ONTARIO WINE AND GRAPE INDUSTRY PERFORMANCE STUDY

VQA Ontario and Deloitte will be conducting the second annual Ontario Wine and Grape Performance Study beginning in late October. Check your inbox for an invitation to participate in the survey and make sure it is forwarded to the appropriate respondent at your winery. This study, part of the Ontario Government’s Wine and Grape Strategy, collects data to measure key performance metrics for wineries and growers. It is intended to assist wineries in identifying opportunities to maximize business performance as well as enhance government’s understanding of the impact of its programs.

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. The survey collects detailed financial information but please be assured that all individual data is kept strictly confidential and will not be shared with any other organizations nor will it be used for any purpose except to prepare a report on the industry using relevant aggregate statistics. The 2016 edition of the report is available at <http://www.vqaontario.ca/AboutVQA/News#News> .

TIPS FOR THE MONTH - FINDING THE INFORMATION YOU NEED ON THE VQA WEBSITE

VQA Ontario maintains a comprehensive website. Here are a few highlights to help you find the information you need:

Wine approvals process: <http://www.vqaontario.ca/Regulations/Processes>

Chemical analysis limits: <http://www.vqaontario.ca/Regulations/Standards> click on Chemical Analysis

Guide to label requirements: <http://www.vqaontario.ca/Regulations/Packaging>

Links to legislation (the Act and Regulations): <http://www.vqaontario.ca/Regulations/Standards>

Publications, powerpoint presentations, appellation maps and brochures:

<http://www.vqaontario.ca/Resources/Library>

Past newsletters: <http://www.vqaontario.ca/Resources/Industry>

Statistics and vintage reports in our Annual Reports:

<http://www.vqaontario.ca/AboutVQA/AnnualReports/2016/Overview>

Geographical information about our appellations: <http://www.vqaontario.ca/Appellations>

Governance information such as bylaws: <http://www.vqaontario.ca/AboutVQA/Governance>

Information for prospective wineries who are thinking about VQA participation:

<http://www.vqaontario.ca/FutureWineries/Overview>

Also did you know the following are always available to print or reprint when logged in to the VQA Services secure site:

- Certificates of Analysis
- Certificates of Origin
- Past invoices
- Copies of Transfer forms or Approval applications

Lab and tasting scheduled operating dates are also posted on the secure site to assist with planning submissions.