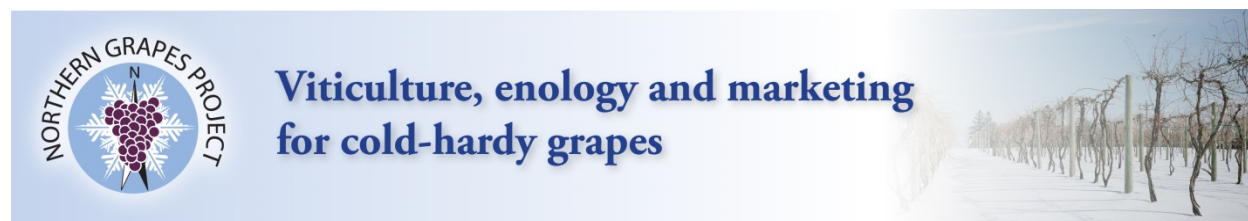


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Contact: Tim Martinson, tem2@cornell.edu, 315-787-2448



Northern Grapes Project Receives \$2.6 Million USDA Grant

The Northern Grapes Project received an additional \$2.6 million in funding from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Specialty Crops Research Initiative to complete the final two years of the multistate effort, which began in 2011.

The project focuses on growing extremely cold-hardy wine grape varieties that are new to both growers and consumers, creating a rapidly-expanding industry of small vineyard and winery enterprises. Dr. Tim Martinson, Senior Extension Associate at Cornell University, leads the project team, which includes research and Extension personnel from ten institutions in the Upper Midwest and Northeast.

"New producers are spread across twelve states, most without an established wine industry," said Martinson. "By working together, the Northern Grapes Project team provides more resources to producers than would be available if each state had its own effort."

The new varieties have growth habits and flavor profiles that are quite different from well-known varieties. So the project's researchers have been working to determine the best ways to grow them, turn them into flavorful wines, and market those wines in local and regional markets.

In the first three years of the project, team members invested heavily in field and laboratory trials, conducted consumer surveys and a baseline survey of the industry, and provided outreach programming to an aggregate audience of more than 7,000.

"The continued success of this project in obtaining funding is testament to the team's exceptional productivity and to how this project has impacted grape production in northern regions across the Northeast and upper Midwest," said Dr. Thomas Burr, Director of the New York State Agricultural Experiment Station.

"As a producer, having scientists involved is especially valuable to us as they are conducting rigorous tests to back up our hunches and our theories," said Dave Greenlee, a project advisory council member and co-owner of Tucker's Walk Vineyard in Garretson, S.D. Greenlee cites trials of various trellising systems in vineyards and sensory evaluations of wines using different yeast strains in the lab. "These save us time and help us improve our products," he points out.

The grant was funded by the USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture's Specialty Crops Research Initiative, which supports multi-institution, interdisciplinary research on crops including fruits, vegetables, tree nuts, and ornamentals. The project includes personnel from Cornell University, the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station, Iowa State University, Michigan State University, North

Dakota State University, South Dakota State University, the University of Minnesota, the University of Nebraska, the University of Vermont, and the University of Wisconsin.

For more information, visit the Northern Grapes Project website at <http://northerngrapesproject.org/>.



Photo credit: Chrislyn Particka, Cornell University

Northern Grapes Project Director Dr. Timothy Martinson speaks about the training system trials during a field day at Coyote Moon Vineyards in Clayton, NY. A variety of training systems are being evaluated in New York, Iowa, and Nebraska, in order to determine which training systems work best for the cold-hardy wine grape cultivars. In addition to hosting research trials, Coyote Moon Vineyards President Phil Randazzo serves on the Northern Grapes Project Advisory Council.