

September 7, 2006

Dear NC Winemakers:

I wanted to give you an update as to our progress in putting together a program to help vineyard managers and winemakers better evaluate their grape growing and winemaking processes.

We have acquired a portable near infrared spectrometer that will allow us to instantly evaluate juice or must using a number of parameters, including TA, pH and soluble solids (Brix). We will be introducing this technology in two stages. One is a calibration stage and the second is full implementation. More devices are on the way.

Near IR meters function to measure many parameters simultaneously on the basis of *training sets*. That is, the software must have a history of data to base current results on. In essence, when we receive the unit it is a blank slate. Since we want to use NC data and not that for other regions, we need to develop a data set that matches our own market. This is what we are asking for during the 2006 harvest. With this data we will calibrate the instrument to build the data set to enable us to reliably test all juice and wine next harvest season (2007). This data gathering work will benefit not only App State, but everyone who will depend on the equipment in the future to provide quick and accurate analysis of juice and must.

We hope you will support our efforts by letting us train our instruments on your juice and must this season. This is necessary if we are to be able to recognize the same parameters in your vineyards next year. Later, the same procedure will be necessary with the finished wine. We appreciate your patience as we go through this ramping up process; we estimate that as many as 6000 measurements may be necessary to fully train the instrumentation in this environment! It will benefit us all by providing independent and accurate data which vineyard owners and winemakers can use to ensure they are producing quality grapes and wine that our state can be proud of. If you have any questions, or would like to volunteer your vineyard or winery as a data set gathering site, please contact me at holdergn@appstate.edu or 828.262.2757

An activity which we need to begin immediately is training on the basis of varietal juice. To do this, we need a half gallon of non-fermented juice and a half gallon of must which *should be put in the freezer IMMEDIATELY after must is created*. We need these when the calibration is to be done. Understand this is not ideal, but it is something we can come and get and bring back to the laboratory for a through testing and will allow us to work while the mobile laboratory is still being built, so that when it arrives, all will be in readiness. Without this, we will not have any reference to test your juice for upcoming harvest seasons.

I appreciate your understanding. We don't want to lose any time in your service. Please help us by getting the word out to as many as you can.

Grant Holder