

Northern Michigan FruitNet 2013

Northwest Michigan Horticultural Research Center

Weekly Update

March 26, 2013

SURVEY ON COLD DAMAGE IN TEMPERATE GRAPE AND TREE FRUIT CROPS

For those of you who were at the IFTA meeting in Boston in late February, Dr. Greg Lang, Dept of Horticulture, MSU, gave a 5-min presentation and handout about an online survey that was put together by a group of scientists who are working on putting together a future SCRI grant proposal focused on cold damage in temperate grape and tree fruit crops. The survey, which is a quick 12-question multiple choice survey to be completed by fruit growers, is at:

www.surveymonkey.com/s/ColdDamageTreeFruitGrapes

So far, we have received the most response from grape growers and we would very much like to have a greater representation of tree fruit grower responses. The survey should only take a few minutes of your time and we would appreciate your input before the survey closes **at the end of March**.

PRESERVE YOUR FARM THROUGH PURCHASE OF DEVELOPMENT RIGHTS IF YOU HAVE AN EXPIRED OIL AND GAS LEASE

Farmland owners should be prepared to sign an Affidavit of Non-Production at closing.

Posted on **March 8, 2013, MSUE News**, by **Kendra Wills**, Michigan State University Extension

[Purchase of Development Rights](#) or PDR is a voluntary farmland preservation program that pays property owners to place a permanent agricultural conservation easement on their farmland. Property owners wanting to preserve their farmland through PDR need to be aware of the status of their [mineral rights](#). PDR applications ask property owners to state who owns their mineral rights and if they are being leased or not.

The purpose of PDR is to preserve prime and unique farmland for food production. Only some counties and townships in Michigan actively participate in a PDR program. Contact your township office to find out if there is an active PDR program in your area.

Property owners can access the easements, leases and deeds on their property by contacting their County Register of Deeds Office or by hiring a title company to do a title search of their property. Property owners should request copies of all title documents. Title companies usually charge around \$350 for this service.

[Oil and gas leases](#) are a significant concern for PDR programs because this lease conflicts with the purpose of the agricultural conservation easement. Oil and gas development requires disturbance of the soil to extract resources. Agricultural conservation easements prohibit the disturbance of the soil except for normal agricultural practices.

If an active oil and gas lease exists on the property, see the article, "[Oil and gas leases can affect farmland owners' purchase of development rights](#)" from [Michigan State University Extension](#). This article helps property owners understand why active oil and gas leases make it difficult to preserve their land through PDR.

If property owners find they have an expired oil and gas lease, PDR is possible if property owners can truthfully state to following:

1. That the oil and gas company has not installed equipment on their property;
2. And that oil and gas was never extracted on their property.

These statements are made through an Affidavit of Non-Production, which is prepared by the PDR Program or the title company and signed by the property owner(s) at the PDR closing. The Affidavit of Non-Production is then recorded with the agricultural conservation easement and other closing documents.

If a property-owner cannot truthfully make these statements, PDR is likely not possible on the property as most PDR Programs require title insurance without oil and gas lease exceptions.

Oil and gas leasing is complex. Legal assistance should be sought before a lease is signed. [Michigan State University Extension](#) has several educational oil and gas [resources available](#) for property owners online.

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Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development Announces Specialty Crop Grant Opportunity

Proposals due to MDARD by April 12, 2013

The Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD) today announced new opportunities for Michigan businesses through the Specialty Crop Block Grant Program from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Ag Marketing Service. The program is designed to enhance the competitiveness of Michigan's specialty crops. Grant proposals must be submitted to MDA-grants@Michigan.gov no later than 3 p.m. on Friday, April 12, 2013.

The grant funding is contingent on the availability of funds from USDA and Michigan's allocation has yet to be determined.

The grants, ranging from \$10,000 to \$75,000, enhance the competitiveness of the state's specialty crops, including, but not limited to: research, promotion, marketing, nutrition, trade enhancement, food safety, food security, plant health programs, education, increased knowledge and consumption, increased innovation, improved efficiency and reduced costs of distribution systems, environmental concerns and conservation, product development, good agricultural practices, good handling practices, and good manufacturing practices.

Eligible applicants include non-profit organizations, local, state, and federal government entities, for-profit organizations, and universities. The organizations must be legal entities recognized by the IRS, and applicants must reside and/or conduct their business or organization in Michigan. Applications should demonstrate how the project will potentially produce measurable impacts for the specialty crop industry as a whole.

For program information, application form, or submission criteria, please visit www.michigan.gov/mdard or contact Nancy Nyquist at nyquistn@michigan.gov or 517-241-4381.

2013 MSU TREE FRUIT IPM SCHOOL COURSE EVALUATION

About ten days ago I sent out a link to the online course evaluation for the 2013 MSU Tree Fruit IPM School - this is a friendly reminder that the survey is still open and if you haven't already responded, please consider doing so today! Your feedback is very important to us in helping to improve the program into the future.

Following is the link to the survey, which takes about 10-15 minutes to complete: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/ZV26JH2>

Thanks again for participating in this year's Tree Fruit IPM School and for taking the time to give us your feedback!

Best wishes,
Julianna K. Wilson, Ph.D.
(formerly Julianna K. Tuell)
Tree Fruit IPM Outreach Specialist
Department of Entomology, MSU



THE NORTHERN GRAPES PROJECT WEBINAR SERIES

Towards Startup Winery Profitability: When do I Start Making Money and How do I Maximize Sales?

Gregg McConnell, Farm Credit East



Miguel Gomez, Cornell University



Many wineries have been started in the past decade with the dream of making great wine as well as making a return on investment. High capital costs and slow turning inventory often hold back income during the early years. We will discuss what is a reasonable expectation of profitability for a winery based on its size, when can that profit be expected, and perhaps most important, when will that profit turn to cash flow.

Tasting rooms play a key role in the business strategy of wineries in emerging wine regions. We have examined the drivers of overall customer satisfaction in tasting room visits and the impacts of overall satisfaction on tasting room sales. We found that excellent service is the primary driver of customer satisfaction; on average, highly-satisfied customers spend additional \$10 and buy one additional wine bottle in comparison to the average tasting room visitor.

Tuesday, April 9th, 2013

Noon Eastern DST (11:00 AM Central) and 7:00 PM Eastern DST (6:00 PM Central)

NEW THIS YEAR! We have switched to a different platform, so no longer have space restrictions during webinar sessions. Therefore, once you have registered for one Northern Grapes webinar, you will always receive an email the Friday before the webinar containing the web address (URL) for both webinar sessions as well as connection instructions. If you are receiving this email directly from Chrislyn Particka or Tim Martinson, you have registered for a past webinar and can safely assume you will get the URL and connection instructions.

If you have received this email from someone other than Chrislyn Particka or Tim Martinson, you need to register via the link below.

To Register: Registration is free. Fill out the online form posted at:

https://cornell.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_ONBFUEu4db08xAV

Registration will be open through 8am (Eastern) on Friday, April 5th.

Further Northern Grapes Project information is available on-line at <http://northerngrapesproject.org/>

The Northern Grapes Project is funded by the USDA's Specialty Crops Research Initiative Program of the National Institute for Food and Agriculture, Project # 2011-51181-30850

ON FARM COMPOSTING WORKSHOP TO BE HELD APRIL 10

Participants will learn how to recycle plant waste and make compost on their farm.

Posted on **March 22, 2013, MSUE News**, by **Diane Brown**, Michigan State University Extension

Have you been looking for solutions to manage the cull piles and vegetable waste that accumulate at your farm every year? Would you like to find a method other than burning to dispose of brush generated by pruning operations? During [Piled Higher and Deeper](#), a beginner's guide to on-farm composting held April 10 from 1 to 5 p.m. at the [Southwest Michigan Research and Extension Center](#), you will learn how to recycle plant waste and use it to create your own "black gold," a soil amendment that, when made properly, will increase soil organic matter, provide micronutrients and increase retention of soil moisture.

Led by [Michigan State University Extension's](#) Beth Clawson and MSUE vegetable expert Ron Goldy, this workshop will cover biology and core principles of composting, site design, management and operations, precautions when making and using compost, the economics of composting and troubleshooting.

Handouts and light refreshments are included in the \$30 registration cost. Reserve your space in this workshop and [register today](#) to learn how you can begin creating your own "black gold." Deadline to register is Friday, April 5.

The Southwest Michigan Research and Extension Center is located at 1791 Hillandale Rd., Benton Harbor, Mich. ([view map and directions](#)). For questions, contact [Diane Brown](#) at the [Berrien County MSUE office](#) at 269-944-4126.

This article was published by [Michigan State University Extension](#). For more information, visit <http://www.msue.msu.edu>. To contact an expert in your area, visit <http://expert.msue.msu.edu>, or call 888-MSUE4MI (888-678-3464)

GRANT FUNDING FOR GROWERS – PART 1

While not plentiful, grant opportunities for growers do exist. There are, however, important things to consider if you are interested in grant funding.

Posted on **March 16, 2013, MSUE News**, by **Rob Sirrine**, Michigan State University Extension

One of the most frequent requests made to [Michigan State University Extension](#) educators is for information about grant funding opportunities for growers and producers. While there aren't limitless pools of money just waiting to be given away, there are a limited number of grants available to growers. Having helped several growers receive grants, here are several tips I can provide.

First, although grant deadlines may seem far off, applications typically take several months to fine-tune so start planning now! Review the grant requirements to ensure that you are eligible to apply and that your request is allowable.

Second, investigate what has been funded in prior years. This can provide a useful clue as to what is likely to be funded in the future. For example, final project reports of previously funded North Central Region Sustainable Agriculture Research & Education Farmer/Rancher grant are accessible on the [NCR SARE website](#).

Third, begin to gather the requisite guidelines from each of the granting organizations. Guidelines will inform you of funding limits, allowable project length, and allowable uses of grant funds.

Fourth, make sure you address every question asked and exactly follow the grant details. If there is a page or word limit, stay within it. If there is a hard deadline, do not expect to submit the grant the following day. If you have questions call and talk to the granting agency—it can never hurt to ask for more specific information.

Finally, have multiple people review your grant prior to submission. The more people you have review the grant the better. MSU Extension educators and other farmers may be able to provide advice.

Part II of this series covers [more specific grants eligible to Michigan growers](#).

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GRANT FUNDING FOR GROWERS – PART II

While not plentiful, grant opportunities for growers do exist. Here is a brief list of grants offered to Michigan growers.

Posted on **March 16, 2013, MSUE News**, by **Rob Sirrine**, Michigan State University Extension

This article follows [Grant funding for growers: Part I](#), which offered guidelines for growers interested in pursuing grant funding. In Part II, [Michigan State University Extension](#) outlines some grants of interest to Michigan growers.

NCR SARE Farmer Rancher

NCR-SARE's Farmer Rancher Grant Program is a competitive grants program for farmers and ranchers who want to explore sustainable solutions to problems through on-farm research, demonstration, and

education projects. Farmer Rancher grants individual (\$7,500 maximum), partner (\$15,000 maximum), or group (\$22,500 maximum) grants for ideas initiated by farmers and ranchers.

Important Dates

August - Call for Proposals

Late November - Proposals Due

Spring - Funds Available to Recipients.

Organic Farming Research Foundation Education and Outreach Grants Program

The Organic Farming Research Foundation (OFRF) offers funding for organic seed quality or crop breeding projects. Grants are intended to fund development of educational activities and resources on certified organic production. OFRF will consider proposals for media or interactive outreach. Limited to \$15,000 per year.

Important Dates

Proposals due by May 15, 2013.

Food Animal Concerns Trust Fund-a-Farmer Project

The Fund-a-Farmer Project, a project of Food Animal Concerns Trust, awards grants of up to \$1,500 for projects that help family farmers transition to pasture-based systems, improve the marketing of their humane products, or more generally to enrich the conditions in which the farm animals are raised. Farms applying for funding for a pasture or welfare project must raise at least one of the following animal species: pigs, broiler chickens, laying hens, dairy cows, and beef cattle. Farms applying for funding for a marketing-based project must raise at least one of the following species: goats, sheep, pigs, broiler chickens, laying hens, dairy cows, and beef cattle. Grants will be made only to farmers for a project on a working, independent family farm.

Important Dates

Applications must be submitted online or postmarked by May 1, 2013.

USDA Value Added Producer Grant

The primary objective of the VAPG program is to help agricultural producers enter into value-added activities related to the processing and/or marketing of bio-based value-added products. Generating new products, creating and expanding marketing opportunities, and increasing producer income are the end goals of this program. You may receive priority if you are a beginning farmer or rancher, a socially disadvantaged farmer or rancher, a small or medium-sized farm or ranch structured as a family farm, a farmer or rancher cooperative, or are proposing a mid-tier value chain, as defined in the program regulation.

USDA NRCS- EQIP Program

The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) is a voluntary conservation program administered by the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service. It supports production agriculture and environmental quality as compatible goals. Through EQIP, farmers, ranchers, private forest land owners and Federally-recognized American Indian tribes may receive financial and technical assistance to implement structural and land management conservation practices on eligible agricultural land.

For more information on grants please contact your local [MSU Extension](#) office or visit the following websites for more grant options: [ATTRA](#), [the USDA National Agricultural Library](#), [Beginning Farmers](#), or [MOSES Organic](#) for organic grant options.

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SPILL PREVENTION, CONTROL AND COUNTERMEASURES FOR FARMS

Farmers whose fuel oil storage capacity meet the EPA's Spill Prevention, Control and Countermeasures program criteria have until May 10, 2013 to file their SPCC plan.

Posted on **March 20, 2013, MSUE News**, by **Gerald May**, Michigan State University Extension

The [U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's](#) (EPA) Spill Prevention Control and Countermeasures regulation is intended to prevent oil and oil products from reaching the waters of the U.S. and adjoining shorelines. The [Spill Prevention Control and Countermeasures](#) (SPCC) Plan is the facility owner's plan for preventing a spill and retaining the oil on site in case of a spill from aboveground oil storage tanks and containers. This regulation has been in existence since 1974 and was applicable to farms if they met the threshold oil storage capacity, and there was a reasonable expectation that a discharge could get to waters of the U.S. The farming industry was granted an extension to comply with this regulation. Currently, farmers who meet the SPCC criteria have until **May 10, 2013** to update old plans or develop and implement new SPCC plans.

You will be expected to develop and implement an SPCC plan if your farm meets all the criteria listed below:

- Stores or transfers oil or oil products such as gasoline, on and off-road diesel, hydraulic and lube oil, animal fats and vegetable oils, adjuvant oil, etc.
- Stores more than 1,320 gallons in above ground tanks or 42,000 gallons below ground
- In case of a spill, could reasonably be expected to discharge to a U.S. waterway or shoreline
- In April of 2011 the EPA exempted all milk and milk product containers from the SPCC requirements therefore these planning and structural requirements do not include bulk tanks on dairy farms. For more information see the [Michigan State University Extension News](#) article on the [SPCC exemption](#).

Farmers may self-certify their SPCC plan without the services of a professional engineer (PE) if they have less than 10,000 gallons total above ground oil storage capacity and have had no spills to the waters of the U.S. in the past three years. If no more than 5,000 gallons is stored in a single container, they may fill out the [Tier I template which is available online](#).

Some of the information provided in an SPCC plan includes:

- A list of oil containers on the farm and containment provided for them
- A description of measures that will prevent oil from reaching surface waters
- Clean up procedures if a spill should occur
- A contact list in case of a spill including first responders
- A five-year review and evaluation of their plan for changes and updates

Free training

To help farmers determine if the SPCC program is applicable to their farm and to help them meet the plan requirements, the [Michigan Department of Environmental Quality](#) is hosting a FREE webinar on Tuesday, March 26 from 10 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. Take advantage of this free webinar before you get busy with preparations for the growing season. Registration for the webinar is [available online](#). For more information on the webinar, contact [Jennifer Acevedo](#) at 517-335-3203.

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WEBSITES OF INTEREST

Insect and disease predictive information is available at:

<http://enviroweather.msu.edu/homeMap.php>

60 Hour Forecast

<http://www.agweather.geo.msu.edu/agwx/forecasts/fcst.asp?fileid=fous46ktvc>

Information on cherries is available at the new cherry website:

<http://www.cherries.msu.edu/>

Fruit CAT Alert Reports have moved to MSU News

<http://news.msue.msu.edu>