

## California Wine Community Sustainability Report 2004



# Chapter 15 NEIGHBORS AND COMMUNITY

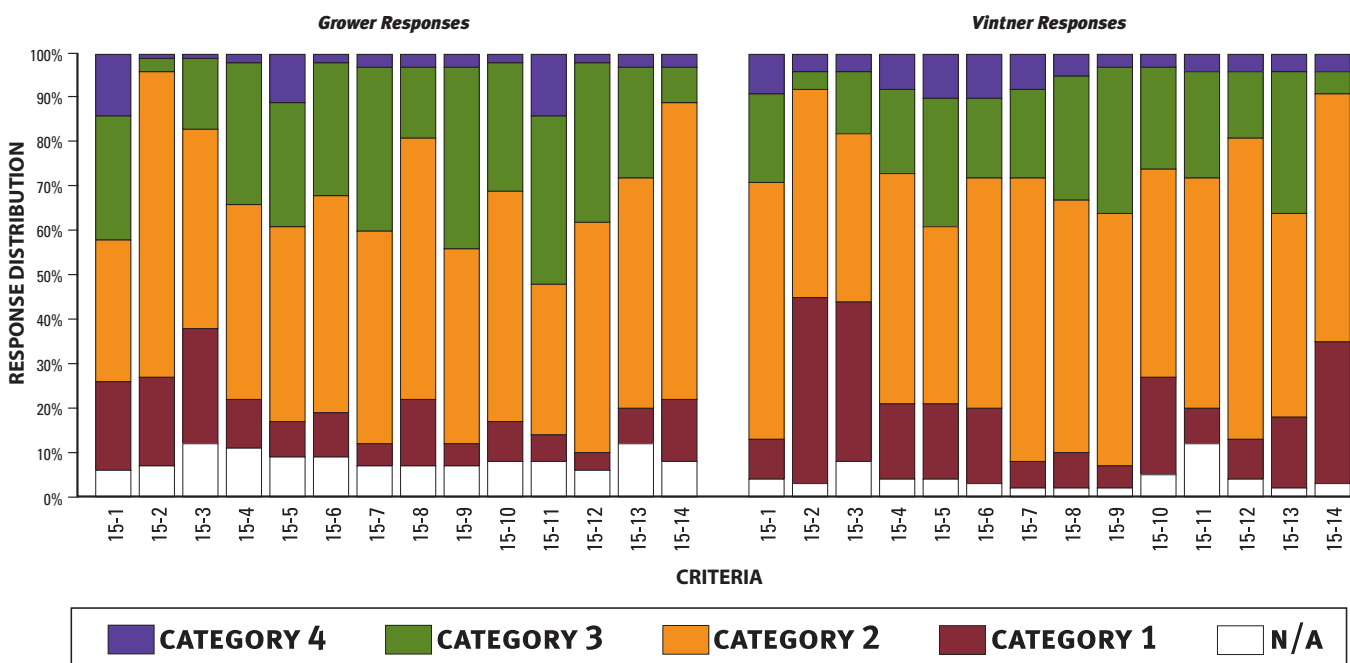
# Background

The population projections for California are truly daunting—20 million new people coming to the State over the next 25 years. This projected influx of new Californians increases the probability of conflicts over land use, water, public services, air quality, traffic and other issues that become increasingly important, like “viewsheds.” The growth pressures and quality of life demands presented by these new neighbors will only accelerate the sense of change that growers and vintners are already experiencing.

The key to staying current with the pressing issues of the greater community is to begin to communicate with them. Growers and vintners must ask themselves if they know their neighbors. They must determine if they know how to contact their neighbors if a new procedure will impact them and therefore needs to be explained. Neighbors need to be able to contact growers and vintners if they have a question or concern. Two of the biggest barriers to effective problem solving are a lack of communication and a profusion of misinformation. To minimize these potential barriers, time must be taken to research local issues, learn and understand the various perspectives, and attend meetings and workshops with community members to ensure that the grower and vintner perspectives are represented.

Sustainability supports diversity in the biological community and also in the social community. Understanding the changing dynamics of the local neighborhood and the broader community are part of this diversity, because everybody is facing the same mounting pressures. The strategic advantage will be with those operations that take a proactive approach and invest in

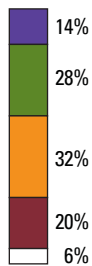
## NEIGHBORS AND COMMUNITY BENCHMARK DATA



building trust and cooperation with the community. Waiting for an issue to get noticed and then trying to react accordingly reinforces doubt and increases conflict. It will take the efforts of all the neighbors in the community to successfully integrate farming and winemaking practices and operations into the day-to-day living of all Californians.

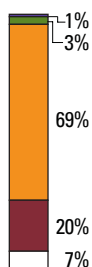
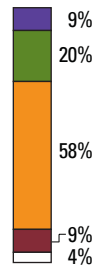
## Benchmark Data

**Grower Response**

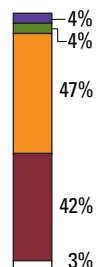


**5-1. PLANNING, MONITORING, GOALS & RESULTS** In any vineyard or winery operation, it is important to get the “lay of the land” before planting the crop or making wine. The same is true for understanding the issues that neighbors and the broader community may have in regards to vineyards and winemaking operations. This “community snapshot” will provide the foundation for developing an outreach plan with goals and results that can be monitored and corrected in a proactive strategy for neighbor and community relations. 42% of growers and 29% of vintners have developed an outreach plan; have participated in one or more community forums; are aware and conversant in relevant neighbor and community issues; and try to be proactive in addressing issues. 14% of growers and 9% of vintners also use neighbor and community input to improve the plan, track outreach and communication goals annually; and, they are proactive by making information available before the public demands it. 32% of the growers and 58% of the vintners are investigating the issues and the development of a plan, while attempting to respond to issues before the community demands action. 20% of the growers and 9% of the vintners are not aware of neighbor or community issues, have no plan to investigate local issues and only respond to issues after the community demands action. 6% of the growers and 4% of the vintners replied N/A, not applicable or information not available.

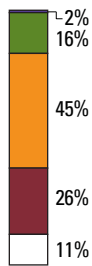
**Vintner Response**



**15-2. SUSTAINABILITY VALUES STATEMENT** An important component in any outreach program is communicating the sustainability values of the company. This builds awareness and understanding with the neighbors and other community members and provides the common ground that allows for peaceful coexistence with all parties. For larger companies these statements may be most effective when written down, while smaller operations may have such a personal relationship with neighbors that their values can be expressed verbally. 73% of the growers and 55% of the vintners have a sustainability value statement that is expressed verbally and expands business value beyond strictly economic terms to include environmental and social factors. 4% of growers and 8% of vintners have a statement that is written down and adopted as part of the company’s policies, track environmental and social factors to determine their value to the business and make employees aware of the value statements. 1% of growers and 4% of vintners also distribute these value statements beyond their internal stakeholders through the web, newsletters and other distributed materials. 20% of growers and 42% of vintners do not have a sustainability values statement. 7% of growers and 3% of vintners replied N/A, not applicable or information not available.

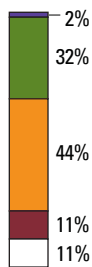
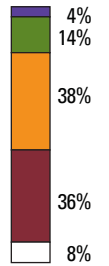


**Grower Response**

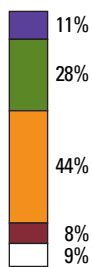
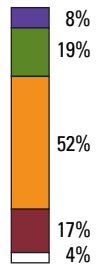


**15-3. COMMUNITY HOUSING** Particular issues will impact growers and vintners differently, but one issue to which everyone needs to pay attention is community housing. As the population of California increases, urban growth boundaries will expand and more pressure will be placed on growers to convert their vineyards to housing. 63% of the growers and 56% of the vintners have invested time to become aware and conversant in this issue. 18% of growers and vintners also have attended community forums working to improve housing. In addition, 2% of growers and 4% of vintners feel knowledgeable about community housing issues, actively working to improve conditions and appointing one manager to serve as a liaison to the community. 26% of growers and 36% of vintners are not generally informed about community housing issues. 11% of growers and 8% of the vintners replied N/A, not applicable or information not available.

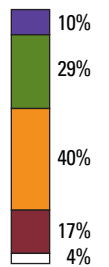
**Vintner Response**



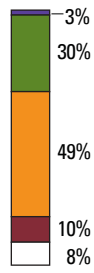
**15-4. TRANSPORTATION & TRAFFIC** A population increase is often accompanied by traffic and transportation issues. Historic road use that growers and vintners have had can quickly shift based on the perspective that neighbors and other community members moving into the area may bring with them. 78% of the growers and 79% of the vintners have invested time to become aware and conversant in transportation issues and have plans to identify traffic concerns of neighbors. 34% of growers and 27% of vintners also have contacted the neighbors to identify traffic issues, attended community forums working to improve transportation and feel that their neighbors know how to contact them if there are any concerns. In addition, 2% of growers and 8% of vintners are knowledgeable about transportation issues; are actively working to improve traffic conditions; have appointed one manager to serve as liaison to the community; and provide neighbors with advanced notice on any changes to operations that may impact traffic. 11% of growers and 17% of vintners are not generally informed about local traffic and regional transportation issues. 11% of growers and 4% of vintners replied N/A, not applicable or information not available.



**15-5. COMMUNITY EDUCATIONAL ISSUES** Access to a good education in communities near vineyards and wineries is critical to the success of the industry. The future pool of employees and more immediately, the offspring of current employees depend on local schools for a decent education. 83% of the growers and 79% of the vintners have invested time to become aware and conversant in this issue. 39% of growers and vintners also have attended community forums working to improve education. In addition, 11% of growers and 10% of vintners feel knowledgeable about education issues, actively work to improve conditions and appoint one manager to serve as liaison to the community. 8% of growers and 17% of vintners are not generally informed about education issues. 9% of growers and 4% of the vintners replied N/A, not applicable or information not available.

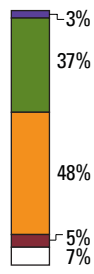
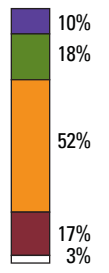


**Grower Response**

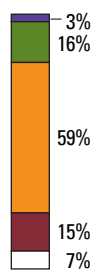
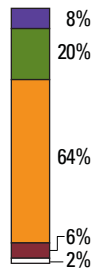


**15-6. COMMUNITY HEALTH CARE ISSUES** One of the indicators of sustainability is the health of the system. A major part of that system is the human beings that make up the local community. Healthy people are important to a viable economy by not draining limited health care programs, filling emergency rooms or spreading contagious diseases. Ensuring that the health of the community in which they operate is vibrant is a good investment for any business. 82% of the growers and 80% of the vintners have invested time to become aware and conversant in this issue. 33% of growers and 28% of vintners have also attended community forums working to improve health care. In addition, 3% of growers and 10% of vintners feel knowledgeable about community health care issues, actively work to improve conditions and appoint one manager to serve as liaison to the community. 10% of growers and 17% of vintners are not generally informed about community health care issues. 8% of growers and 3% of vintners replied N/A, not applicable or information not available.

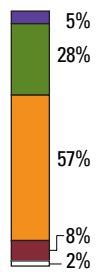
**Vintner Response**



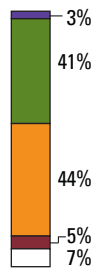
**15-7. COMMUNITY WATER QUALITY & SUPPLY** The exponential population expansion in California is placing enormous pressures on available water supplies, which are renewable but limited. Water is going to be needed by more people for more purposes, and in turn the quality of the available water is going to be increasingly monitored to make sure that this precious resource remains fit for human consumption. 88% of the growers and 92% of the vintners have invested time to become aware and conversant in this issue. 40% of growers and 28% of vintners have also attended community forums on regional water issues and provide examples and/or tours of their water conservation and efficiency programs. In addition, 3% of growers and 8% of vintners feel knowledgeable about regional water issues; actively work to improve and protect water supplies; appoint one manager to serve as liaison to the community; and where possible participate in water reuse programs. 5% of growers and 6% of vintners are not generally informed about local and regional water quality and supply issues. 7% of growers and 2% of vintners replied N/A, not applicable or information not available.



**15-8. SMART GROWTH** As California's population quickly swells, growth will have to occur in many places to accommodate all of the new people. In the past, much of the growth in the State has been haphazard, as evidenced by the blight of urban sprawl. Future growth does not have to occur in the same manner. Experience and successful examples of "smart growth" can help redirect cities and counties to grow more sustainably. 78% of the growers and 90% of vintners have invested time to become aware and conversant in local and regional urban sprawl issues. 19% of growers and 33% of vintners also have attended some appropriate community forums working on issues of urban sprawl, have become aware of urban growth boundaries in relation to their agricultural operations and monitor development patterns. In addition, 3% of growers and 5% of vintners feel knowledgeable about urban sprawl issues; actively work to protect public health and environmental quality by participating in community meetings; appoint one manager to serve as liaison to the community; and provide additional training for managers if needed (conflict resolution.) 15% of grower and 8% of vintners are not generally informed about smart growth issues. 7% of growers and 2% of vintners felt that this did not apply to them.

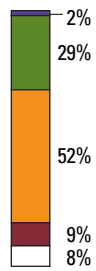
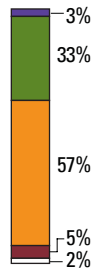


**Grower Response**

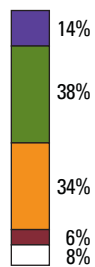
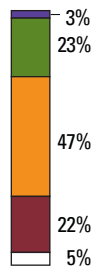


**15-9. AGRICULTURE & WINERY CHEMICALS** As more people take up residence in closer proximity to vineyards and wineries, the potential for conflict increases. One of the most contentious issues is around the use of agricultural and winery chemicals. 88% of the growers and 93% of the vintners have invested time to become aware and conversant in this issue. 44% of growers and 36% of vintners also have attended community forums working to provide health and environmental information on chemicals, provide awareness materials (brochures, reports or fact sheets), and provide examples at forums of chemical handling at operations. 3% of growers and vintners feel knowledgeable about local and regional pesticide issues and are actively working to protect public health and environmental quality by participating in community meetings; making publicly available the benefits of IPM and precision agricultural practices; appointing one manager to serve as liaison to the community; and distributing awareness materials at forums. 5% of growers and vintners are not generally informed about local and regional chemical issues. 7% of growers and 2% of vintners replied N/A, not applicable or information not available.

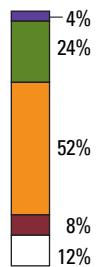
**Vintner Response**



**15-10. COMMUNITY NOISE CONCERNS** The increase in background noise from more people and more electronic and mechanical tools can amplify the noise emitted from vineyard and winery operations and become a nuisance to neighbors. 83% of the growers and 73% of the vintners have invested time to become aware and conversant in local and regional noise concerns. 31% of growers and 26% of vintners also have attended community forums working to provide health and environmental information on noise concerns, provide awareness materials (brochures, reports or fact sheets), and provide examples at forums of noise reduction efforts at operations. 2% of growers and 3% of vintners feel knowledgeable about local and regional noise concerns, are actively working to protect public health and environmental quality by participating in community meetings; appointing one manager to serve as liaison to the community and distributing awareness materials at forums. 9% of growers and 22% of vintners are not generally informed about local and regional noise concerns. 8% of growers and 5% of vintners replied N/A, not applicable or information not available.



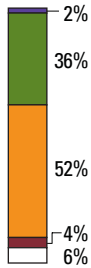
**15-11. EROSION CONTROL** For vineyards and wineries in steep terrain, loss of soil due to erosion can be a major concern for neighbors and the community. Erosion can impair water bodies and the biodiversity in aquatic systems. 86% of the growers and 80% of the vintners have invested time to become aware and conversant in local and regional erosion issues. 52% of growers and 28% of vintners also have attended some appropriate community forums working on erosion issues, provide awareness materials (brochures, reports or fact sheets) and provide examples at forums of erosion control at operations. In addition, 14% of growers and 4% of vintners feel knowledgeable about local and regional erosion issues and are actively working to protect public health and environmental quality by participating in community meetings; making publicly available the benefits of erosion control practices; appointing one manager as acting liaison to the community; and distributing awareness materials at forums. 6% of growers



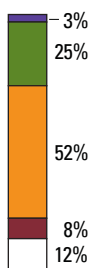
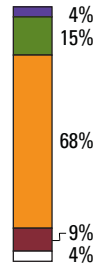
**Grower Response**

**Vintner Response**

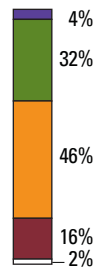
and 8% of vintners are not generally informed about local and regional erosion issues. 8% of growers and 12% of vintners replied N/A, not applicable or information not available. Many vineyard and winery operations are in areas where erosion is not a concern. These operations did not feel that this question applied to them.



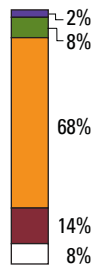
**15-12. AIR QUALITY** As the demand on natural resources increases, the threats to basic life support systems begin to become more serious. One of the most serious threats is to the quality of the air. The quality of the air impacts all of the biological diversity, including winegrapes and humans. Air quality is connected to health issues and is under increasing regulatory oversight. 90% of the growers and 87% of the vintners have invested time to become aware and conversant in local air quality concerns. 38% of growers and 19% of vintners also have attended community forums working to provide health and environmental information on agricultural concerns about air quality, provide awareness materials (brochures, reports or fact sheets) and provide examples at forums of air quality improvements at operations. In addition, 2% of growers and 4% of vintners feel knowledgeable about local and regional erosion issues and are actively working to protect public health and environmental quality by participating in community meetings; making publicly available the benefits of air quality improvements; appointing one manager to serve as liaison to the community; and distributing awareness materials at forums. 4% of growers and 9% of vintners are not generally informed about local and regional erosion issues. 6% of growers and 4% of vintners replied N/A, not applicable or information not available.



**15-13. VISUAL IMPACTS** With many people moving into rural areas where vineyards and wineries have been located for many years, new improvements or expansions of operations can change the scenery and views for others living in the area. These changes impact the “viewshed” of neighbors in the area and include issues such as visual impacts and night lighting. 80% of the growers and 82% of the vintners have invested time to become aware and conversant in local and regional concerns about visual impacts, night lighting and viewsheds. 28% of growers and 36% of vintners also have attended some appropriate community forums working on issues of visual impacts, night lighting and viewsheds; are aware of the potential impacts in relation to all operations of the enterprise; and monitor development and expansion plans for potential visual impacts, night lighting and viewsheds issues. In addition, 3% of growers and 4% of vintners feel knowledgeable about local and regional visual impacts, night lighting and viewsheds issues and are actively working to protect public health and environmental quality by participating in community meetings and appointing one manager to serve as liaison to the community. 8% of growers and 16% of vintners are not generally informed about local and regional visual impacts, night lighting and viewsheds issues. 12% of growers and 2% of vintners replied N/A, not applicable or information not available.

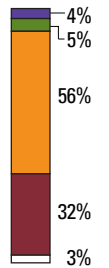


**Grower Response**



**15-14. OUTREACH & COMMUNICATION** As mentioned earlier, a proactive strategy is far better for mitigating and resolving issues before the stage of conflict is reached. At the heart of such a strategy is outreach and communication with neighbors, community members and other stakeholders. 10% of growers and 9% of vintners have a timely and consistent process for making information public, employ formal methods (questionnaires, focus groups) to gauge the community’s attitudes toward the industry, and provide information based on specific requests. 2% of growers and 4% of vintners also have developed and implemented an outreach plan, customize information based on specific requests and use communication to seek common ground and mutual goals with the community. 68% of growers and 56% of vintners are aware of the need to have an outreach and communication plan; use an informal verbal process for making information publicly available; provide consistent information regardless of who is requesting it; and use communication only to react to concerns. 14% of growers and 32% of vintners have not developed a plan, consider all information about operations proprietary and do not have a strategy for gauging the community’s attitudes toward the industry. 8% of growers and 3% of vintners replied N/A, not applicable or information not available.

**Vintner Response**



## Best Practices

**Statewide Strengths:** The SWP workbook sets a very high bar for practices that affect grower and vintner neighbors and the larger community within which they live and work. In 10 of the 14 chapter criteria, 25% or more of the growers and vintners reported the highest level of practices (category “4s” or “3s”). More than 50% of growers reported the highest level of practices for interacting with neighbors and communities on erosion control (criteria 15-11). Vintner strengths include community education issues (criteria 15-3) and minimizing visual impacts (criteria 15-10).

It is a “good neighbor” philosophy that comes into play when management decisions are made at a 48-acre vineyard at the eastern edge of Sonoma County’s Alexander Valley. Hector and Juanita Bedolla and their partner Richard Handal produce premium winegrapes at the River Road site using sustainable farming practices while at the same time taking steps to preserve the area’s abundant wildlife population. “We take care of the environment. You have to know what you are doing and you have to know the effects of your actions,” said Hector Bedolla. “It is all part of sound management.”

The vineyard’s neighbors include a 200-unit residential development to the east, an organic garlic grower to the south, the Russian River to the west and the Nature Conservancy to the north.

“I place a real emphasis on sustainability and being more sensitive to my neighbors and their fears of what we are doing. It changes the way we doing things,” Bedolla said. “We have discontinued the use of pre-emergent herbicides and methyl bromide. We use softer, non-persistent fungicides and insecticides that will not disrupt the beneficial insect population.”

The vineyard has wildlife corridors along its northern and southern boundaries that are used by wildlife making its way from the hills to the Russian River. “We encourage the presence of wildlife on our land. They were present long before we came. Our goal is to complement the conservancy next door,” he said.

## Targets and Timetables

**Statewide Opportunities for Improvements:** There will always be opportunities to strengthen ties with neighbors and community members. The assessment results indicate the greatest opportunities for both growers and vintners include improving outreach and communication (criteria 15-14) and getting more involved with local community housing issues (15-3).

The California Sustainable Winegrowing Alliance has set a desired goal of demonstrating improvement in the scores indicated below. By harvest 2009, CSWA would like to move the average scores to the positions marked in green and purple. When these goals are attained, practices will have improved from the initial benchmark averages by 20%. To reach these goals, CSWA needs partners. If you are interested in helping to improve neighbor and community practices, please email [info@sustainablewinegrowing.org](mailto:info@sustainablewinegrowing.org).

