Lessons Learned and Next Steps

CHAPTER 17
Conclusion: Lessons Learned and Next Steps

WITH NUMEROUS EXAMPLES of continuing progress highlighted in the 2009 Sustainability Report, the California wine community remains committed to expanding and improving the Sustainable Winegrowing Program. From its inception, the SWP has followed an adaptive management approach, moving through the cycle of design, implementation, documentation and analysis, and refinement. To this end, CSWA is using this report to develop a five-year strategy. This strategy – beginning with the identification of lessons learned and next steps – will help ensure continuous improvement for both the program and practices used in California wineries and vineyards. The lessons learned and next steps may also be useful for other groups that are pursuing comprehensive sustainability programs. Another in-depth California Wine Community Sustainability Report will be issued in 2014 along with interim progress reports.

We are pleased that most of the next steps identified in the 2009 report have been achieved, or significant progress has been made.

1. Increase participation of vineyards and wineries (achieved, and progress continues)
2. Offer targeted education and action plan workshops, focused on areas in need of improvement (achieved, and progress continues)
3. Expand our partnership network (achieved, and progress continues)
4. Work with research institutions to target knowledge gaps (achieved, and progress continues)
5. Develop new chapters and related educational materials (achieved)
6. Release an updated edition of the workbook (achieved)
7. Translate educational materials into Spanish (some materials translated, but additional progress could be made with new partnerships and resources)
8. Publish the 2009 Sustainability Report and interim progress reports (achieved)

In addition, by analyzing the data from the 2009 Report, CSWA was able to identify relative strengths and opportunities (see table below), which will help guide the targeted education and program activities over the next five years.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STRENGTHS</th>
<th>MIDDLE GROUND</th>
<th>MOST OPPORTUNITIES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Viticulture</td>
<td>Vineyard Water Management</td>
<td>Energy Efficiency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soil Management</td>
<td>Pest Management</td>
<td>Materials Handling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wine Quality</td>
<td>Winery Water Conservation &amp; Quality</td>
<td>Waste Reduction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ecosystem Management</td>
<td>Human Resources</td>
<td>Environmentally Preferred Purchasing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neighbors &amp; Community</td>
<td>Air Quality</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Lessons Learned

WINE COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP The leadership demonstrated by California winegrowers and vintners and state and regional associations was instrumental to launching and implementing the SWP and to its ongoing implementation. Once a forum was created to define sustainable practices and later develop the Code workbook and organize workshops, existing local leaders stepped forward to contribute, and a number of new leaders have emerged. This grassroots leadership was essential in crafting sustainable practices relevant to regional conditions and different size operations.

Moreover, the high level of workshop participation since 2002 (more than 1,800 individuals in self-assessment workshops and 9,000 attendees at targeted education workshops) is directly attributable to the local leadership from regional associations, private companies, and growers and vintners willing to share best practices. CSWA acknowledges the tremendous effort of the wine community and its partners, and thanks the numerous organizations and individuals that have been actively involved and enable continued success.

EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDER PARTNERSHIPS Partnerships – with government agencies, non-governmental organizations, academic institutions, the private sector, and others – have been critical to the development, evolution, and success of the SWP. These stakeholders not only provided significant input into both editions of the Code workbook, but continue to help CSWA leverage resources and expertise to enhance workshop and educational tools that spur adoption of sustainable practices. The SWP also fosters positive relationships between growers and vintners and other stakeholders, cultivating “win-win” opportunities at the local, regional, state and national levels. This report highlights some of CSWA’s key partnerships and resulting accomplishments, and further demonstrates the importance of multi-sector collaboration.

MEASUREMENT AND REPORTING The SWP’s innovative system of confidentially and securely capturing, tracking and reporting sustainable practices data has allowed for individual participants to receive customized reports to evaluate their performance relative to statewide benchmarks for wineries, and regional, size-class and/or statewide benchmarks for vineyards. The aggregate data has enabled CSWA to measure statewide changes over time and report findings to our partners and the public in a fully transparent manner. The initial aggregate dataset was used in 2004 to establish baselines for all sustainability criteria. This was the first time an agricultural sector published a comprehensive set of sustainability results.

CSWA, armed with this unprecedented sector-wide sustainability “snap-shot,” wanted to establish improvement goals for the next five years. As this component of a sector-wide program had also never been done before, CSWA struggled to find a methodology or comparable program that would provide guidance on how to establish aggressive, yet achievable, improvement targets. Finding no clear methodology or comparable programs, CSWA decided upon 20% improvement targets for all criteria with a mean less than category “3” by the 2009 Report. The across-the-board 20% target has yielded mixed results. This is due in large part because the degree of resources required to make a 20% improvement are not equal between criteria or between categories within criterion. For example, in looking at two criteria within a chapter, it may require 10 times more resources to move from a category “2” to a category “3” between these two criteria. In other words, not all criteria or categories were created equal, so setting 20% improvement targets for criteria is not the same as setting 20% sustainability performance improvement targets.

With five additional years of experience, CSWA has reviewed the initial approach to target setting and does not believe it is the best method to evaluate actual improvements over time. Instead, CSWA is now working on developing quantitative performance metrics. Once developed, these metrics will be used to set new industry-wide, performance-based targets.
CYCLE OF CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT As described in this report, the Cycle of Continuous Improvement – self-assessment, interpreting performance, action planning, implementation of positive change and reassessment – is the process CSWA uses to encourage adoption of sustainable practices. While CSWA has been successful in providing participants with the Code of Practice and self-assessment workshops, tracking and measuring self-assessments results, offering educational opportunities about sustainable practices, and facilitating the exchange of information among growers and vintners, it has not had a robust mechanism to ensure participants implement action plans and reassess their operations. Several of the “Next Steps” described below – in particular Certified California Sustainable Winegrowing, a new third-party certification program for California wineries and vineyards – are intended to facilitate the repeated use of the process, thereby helping “close the loop” of the Cycle.

Next Steps

With this report, the SWP has completed two full program cycles from design and implementation to data collection, analysis, and reporting. The following “next steps” have been identified as critical for increasing the adoption of sustainable winegrowing practices throughout the California wine community.

SEEK ADDITIONAL FUNDING AND NEW PARTNERS Since the inception of the SWP, members of the wine community have contributed the vast majority of the financial support. CSWA has been fortunate to secure a number of grants that have been used to further advance the program, including funding from American Farmland Trust, California Department of Food and Agriculture, California Department of Pesticide Regulation, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, Pacific Gas and Electric Company, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, and USDA Risk Management Agency. The program is seeking additional funding and new partners to maintain the momentum and accomplish the following next steps.

INCREASE AND RETAIN PARTICIPATION OF VINEYARDS AND WINERIES While the initial program goals were exceeded, there are still California vineyards and wineries that have not assessed their operations for sustainable practices. CSWA will continue to coordinate with regional associations and work with Wine Institute and CAWG to secure more growers and vintner participation in the program. As importantly, CSWA will work with these organizations to increase the number of participants that are engaged in the SWP and repeatedly implement the Cycle of Continuous Improvement, including annual re-assessments.

PROVIDE TARGETED EDUCATION EVENTS, RESOURCES AND TOOLS After workshop participants submit assessments and receive confidential customized benchmark reports, there is a need to reconvene these growers and vintners to learn how to optimally apply results to leverage the most value from the adoption of sustainable practices. Since 2004, CSWA has secured grants and partnerships to support educational events and the development of resources and tools relevant to the workbook chapters Energy Efficiency, Ecosystem Management, Integrated Pest Management, Vineyard and Winery Water Conservation and Management, and Air Quality. The ultimate goal is to provide targeted education events, resources and tools for every chapter of the workbook, and offer additional workshops and materials in Spanish.

LAUNCH AND IMPLEMENT CERTIFIED CALIFORNIA SUSTAINABLE WINEGROWING CSWA is launching a third-party certification program related to the SWP in January 2010. The Certified California Sustainable Winegrowing (CCSW-Certified) is the logical next step in the evolution of the SWP and will provide California winegrowers and vintners with the voluntary option of verifying their adherence to a process of continuous improvement in the adoption and implementation of sustainable winegrowing. CCSW-Certified aims to advance the industry as a whole. Certification can serve as a tool to speed adoption of sustainable practices, communicate with stakeholders that are increasingly interested in sustainable business practices, increase transparency and substantiate claims of progress. It is intended to be a catalyst for continual improvement and to support the entrance of growers and vintners at all stages of the sustainability journey to participate and benefit from the program, while enhancing program credibility through third-party verification.

DEVELOP PERFORMANCE METRICS CSWA recently secured a three-year, national USDA NRCS Conservation Innovation Grant to identify a minimum of five key sustainability performance metrics for the industry (energy and water efficiency, GHG intensity, etc.) to be used for benchmarking industry performance and setting targets for improvement. The Stewardship Index for Specialty Crops, a multi-stakeholder effort to develop common sustainability “yardsticks,” will help inform the final set of metrics. Representatives of the California wine industry are actively involved in this related project. In the future, participants in CCSW-Certified must consider industry-wide targets when creating action plans. These metrics will also help CSWA focus its education and outreach to address California wine community priorities and targets for improvement.

BUILD THE BUSINESS CASE FOR SUSTAINABLE WINEGROWING Through several projects designed to highlight the economic benefits of adopting sustainable practices, CSWA has begun to build the business case for sustainable winegrowing. The recognition that practices such as monitoring for pests, reduced tillage, and energy conservation reduce costs were expressed by many of the growers surveyed for Understanding Adoption and Impacts of Sustainable Practices in California Vineyards, a survey and report funded by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation. Reducing Risks through Sustainable Winemaking: A Growers’ Guide, a publication funded by USDA Risk Management Agency, highlights numerous practices that simultaneously result in reduced environmental and/or social risks and potential costs. Future program activities will further

“With a majority of our industry already involved in the SWP, the new certification option evolved as the appropriate next step. Because every organization is at a different point in the sustainability journey, this program allows businesses to use their own baselines to determine a set of goals based on their region, operation and other factors and then focus their resources on the practices that will make the most difference for their company and community, and continually improve year after year.”

–ALLISON JORDAN, CSWA Executive Director
characterize, quantify, and emphasize links between sustainable winegrowing and economic success.

**COMMUNICATE WITH EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS** While most program communication to date has targeted the wine industry, CSWA has begun an outreach and education campaign geared toward other stakeholders and the general public. Given the growing interest in issues pertinent to environmental, and social responsibility by gatekeepers, such as restaurants and retailers, as well as consumers, it is increasingly important to spread the message about the California wine community’s leadership and accomplishments in sustainable winegrowing. CSWA will reach out to key stakeholders and develop communication tools for SWP vintner and grower participants, as well as CCSW-Certified wineries and vineyards.

**WORK WITH RESEARCH INSTITUTIONS TO TARGET KNOWLEDGE GAPS** CSWA has made great strides in strengthening ties with viticulture and enology research institutions, including UC Davis, California State University at Fresno, Cal Poly San Luis Obispo, Sonoma State University, and others over the past five years. Once again, there is a need to review in detail the statewide assessment results with the research community to identify priority research gaps and encourage mission-driven research that speeds the adoption of, and reduces barriers to, sustainable practices.

**PUBLISH PROGRESS REPORTS AND THE 2014 SUSTAINABILITY REPORT** To allow time for the next round of implementation and data collection and analysis, the next full Sustainability Report is not expected to be published until 2014. In the interim, CSWA will provide updates on progress. CSWA will continue to make all reports and various program updates available online at www.sustainablewinegrowing.org.

Providing leadership in sustainability is a prime motivator for the vintners and winegrowers participating in the SWP. We hope that our efforts serve as an inspiration and model for other agricultural sectors to work with their stakeholders to identify, implement, measure, and report on the adoption of best practices that are environmentally sound, socially responsible and economically feasible.

**Acknowledgement of Funders and Partners**

**THE ON-GOING SUCCESS** of the Sustainable Winegrowing Program would not be possible without the active leadership and participation of the California wine community, and partnerships with organizations that provide financial support, contribute vast technical expertise, and help enlist and engage program participants. We are particularly appreciative of the funding provided by the following agencies and organizations to accelerate the adoption of sustainable practices.

**Funders**
- Members of Wine Institute
- Members of California Association of Winegrape Growers
- American Farmland Trust
- California Department of Food and Agriculture
- California Department of Pesticide Regulation
- National Fish and Wildlife Foundation
- Pacific Gas and Electric Company
- USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service
- USDA Risk Management Agency

**Partners**

**Academic Institutions**
- California State University Fresno
- Cal Poly San Luis Obispo
- San Francisco State University
- Santa Rosa Junior College
- Sonoma State University
- Modesto Junior College
- UC Cooperative Extension
- UC Berkeley
- UC Davis
- UC Division of Agriculture and Natural Resources
- UC Integrated Viticulture Production Workgroup
- UC Sustainable Agriculture Research and Extension Program

**Government Agencies**
- California Air Resources Board
- California Department of Food and Agriculture
- California Department of Pesticide Regulation
- California Environmental Protection Agency
- Resource Conservation Districts
- Sonoma County Department of Emergency Services
- Sonoma County Water Agency
- State Water Resources Control Board
- USDA Agricultural Research Service
- USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service
- US Environmental Protection Agency Region 9

**Regional Associations**
- Alexander Valley Vintners
- Amador County Winegrape Growers Association
- Anderson Valley Vintners
- Calaveras Winegrape Alliance
- Central Coast Vineyard Team
- Clarksburg Winegrowers Association
- El Dorado Wine Grape Growers Association
- El Dorado Winery Association
- Lake County Winegrowers Association
- Livermore Valley Winegrowers Association
- Lodi Winegrape Commission
- Madera Vintners Association
- Mendocino Winegrape and Wine Commission
- Monterey County Vintners & Growers Association
- Napa Sustainable Winegrowing Group
- Napa Valley Grape Growers Association
- Napa Valley Vintners
- North Coast Grape Growers Association
- Paso Robles Wine Country Alliance
- placer County Wine and Grape Association
- Ramona Vineyard Association
- San Joaquin Valley Winegrowers Association
- Santa Barbara County Vintners Association
- Santa Cruz Mountains Winegrowers Association
- Santa Rita Hills Vintners and Growers Association
- Sierra Grape Growers Association
- Sonoma County Vintners
- Sonoma County Winegrape Commission
- Sonoma Valley Vintners and Growers
- Temecula Valley Winegrowers Association
- Viticulture Association of Santa Cruz Mountains
- Sustainable Conservation
- Pacific Gas and Electric Company
- The Nature Conservancy
- National Fish and Wildlife Foundation
- Latino Issues Forum
- Kennedy/Jenks Consultants
- American Farmland Trust
- California Farm Bureau Federation
- California Council for Environmental and Economic Balance
- Environmental Defense
- Kennedy/Jenks Consultants
- Latino Issues Forum
- National Fish and Wildlife Foundation
- The Nature Conservancy
- Pacific Gas and Electric Company
- Sustainable Conservation

CSWA works with many other organizations, scientists and farm advisors, government agencies, and environmental and social equity groups. For an up-to-date list of partners, please visit www.sustainablewinegrowing.org.
The companies below contributed to the production of this report:

**SureHarvest**
2901 Park Avenue
Soquel, CA 95073
www.sureharvest.com
jdlott@sureharvest.com

**Patrick Mountain Brand Development**
14000 Upper Zayante Road
Los Gatos, CA 95033
www.patrickmountain.com
patrick@patrickmountain.com
California Sustainable Winegrowing Alliance
Board of Directors 2009-2010
Chris Savage, Chairman, E.&J. Gallo Winery
Kim Ledbetter Bronson, Vice-Chairman, Vino Farms
Steve Smit, Secretary, Constellation Wines US
Mike Sangiacomo, Treasurer, Sangiacomo Vineyards
Bill Cooper, Cooper-Garrod Estate Vineyards
Ben Drake, Drake Enterprises
Dennis Groth, Groth Vineyards & Winery
Michael Honig, Honig Vineyard & Winery
Robert P. (Bobby) Koch, Wine Institute
Steve Quashnick, Quashnick Farms
Ed Matovcik, Foster’s Wine Estates Americas
Neil Roberts, Roberts Vineyard Services
Karen Ross, California Association of Winegrape Growers
Stephen Schafer, San Joaquin Wine Company

Board Member Alternates:
Kristin Belair, Honig Vineyard & Winery
Nat DiBuduo, Allied Grape Growers
John Duarte, Duarte Vineyards
Camron King, California Association of Winegrape Growers
Nancy Light, Wine Institute
Rodney Schatz, R&G Schatz Farms
Michael Walker, Constellation Brands, Inc.

California Sustainable Winegrowing Alliance
Staff and Consultants
Allison Jordan, Executive Director
Joe Browde, Senior Project Manager
Lisa Francioni, Project Manager

Consultants
Jeff Dlott, SureHarvest
Andrew Arnold, SureHarvest
John Garn, ViewCraft
Ann Thrupp, Fetzer Vineyards

In-Kind Staff
Nancy Light, Wine Institute
Gladys Horiuchi, Wine Institute
Sharlene Garcia, California Association of Winegrape Growers
Camron King, California Association of Winegrape Growers

The Sustainable Winegrowing Joint Committee
See www.sustainablewinegrowing.org for member listing.

CSWA values your feedback, questions and concerns. Please contact us at info@sustainablewinegrowing.org.

This report was made possible in part by a Pest Management Alliance grant from the California Department of Pesticide Regulation, funding from Pacific Gas and Electric Company, and contributions from members of Wine Institute and the California Association of Winegrape Growers.