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CALIFORNIA SUSTAINABLE WINEGROWING ALLIANCE
LAUNCHES THIRD-PARTY CERTIFICATION PROGRAM
2009 Sustainable Winegrowing Progress Report Also Released

SAN FRANCISCO – The California Sustainable Winegrowing Alliance (CSWA), established by Wine Institute and the California Association of Winegrape Growers, announced today the introduction of a statewide certification program that provides third-party verification of a winery or vineyard's adherence to a "process of continuous improvement" in the adoption and implementation of sustainable winegrowing practices. The news was shared at a morning press conference at the Merchant's Exchange Building in San Francisco. Open to all California wineries and vineyards as a voluntary option, CSWA's new program, Certified California Sustainable Winegrowing, requires applicants to meet 58 prerequisite criteria to be eligible for the program, assess winery and/or vineyard operations, create and implement an annual action plan and show improvement over time.

The goals of the new certification program are to enhance transparency, encourage statewide participation and advance the entire California wine industry toward best practices in environmental stewardship, conservation of natural resources and socially equitable business practices. Three years in the making, the certification program is the first statewide program available to both wineries and vineyards.

In addition, CSWA released its 2009 Wine Community Sustainability Report measuring the California wine industry's adoption over five years of 227 best management practices from the *Code of Sustainable Winegrowing Practices Self-Assessment Workbook.*

"Third-party certification helps California's wine community speed efforts to create a healthier environment, stronger communities and vibrant businesses," said Robert P. (Bobby) Koch, Wine Institute President and CEO. "The program reflects the California wine community's

commitment to continually produce the finest quality wine and grapes with practices that are environmentally and socially responsible."

"The scale on which California's wine community is adopting and expanding sustainable practices is truly impressive, as the state is the fourth leading wine producer in the world," said California Association of Winegrape Growers (CAWG) Board Chairman Kim Ledbetter Bronson of Vino Farms in Lodi. "CSWA's mission is to bring recognition to the California wine industry as a change leader in the global marketplace and serve as a model for other industries."

To date, 1,566 vineyard and winery organizations representing 68.1 percent of California's 526,000 wine acres and 62.5 percent of the state's 240 million case shipments have evaluated their vineyards and wineries with CSWA's *Code of Sustainable Winegrowing Practices Self-Assessment Workbook*. Wine Institute and CAWG established the Sustainable Winegrowing Program in 2002 and incorporated CSWA a year later as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization to continue implementing the program.

"When you discuss sustainability within the California wine community, it is not just a statement of a program but an imbedded philosophy that we live by each and every day," said CSWA Board Chairman Chris Savage, Senior Director of Environmental Affairs at E. & J. Gallo Winery. "It is the commitment to this philosophy and the very positive impact it has on our businesses that will ensure the continued growth of the California wine industry long into the future."

Certification Process

To be eligible for the certification program, participants meet a set of 58 prerequisites that are among the 227 best management practices in the *Code of Sustainable Winegrowing Practices Self-Assessment Workbook.* The prerequisites were established to ensure the integrity of the certification program, while the "process of continuous improvement" enables broad participation of the California wine industry and ensures progress towards increasingly sustainable practices. The prerequisites include practices that protect air and water quality, conserve water, promote energy efficiency and reduced pesticide use, and preserve ecosystems and animal habitat, among many others. Applicants then self-assess their winery and/or vineyard operations against the best management practices in the *Code* workbook and develop annual action plans and implement improvements. CSWA offers educational workshops, resources and tools to assist wineries and growers through these various stages.

The certification program then verifies a winery and/or vineyard's assessment results through a third-party auditor. To retain their certification, participants undergo annual audits to verify that winery/vineyard self-assessments and action plans are updated annually, and that their

operations show improvement. Onsite audits take place the first year and then every third year after that, and involve activities such as internal inspections and verification of corrective and preventative action processes.

"With a majority of our industry already involved in CSWA's Sustainable Winegrowing Program, the new certification option evolved as the appropriate next step," said CSWA Executive Director Allison Jordan. "Every organization is at a different point in the sustainability journey so our 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, the environment and the community, continually improving year after year."

Industry-wide Performance Metrics Being Developed

While process-based certification is the approach that will be used at the launch of the program, CSWA is initiating a project to develop industry-wide metrics to measure and track sustainability performance. CSWA will develop metrics for water and energy efficiency, greenhouse gas intensity, and several others to be determined in order to baseline the industry's significant impacts and set targets for improvement. Once the metrics are in place, they will tie into the certification program and certified participants will need to consider industry-wide targets when creating action plans. The metrics will also focus on industry efforts around best management practice development and sustainability tool creation.

Communicating Certification and Sustainability

Certified participants will be able to use a logo and/or claims on company web sites, secondary marketing materials and in certified winery facilities or vineyards. CSWA will also list certified wineries and vineyards on the CSWA web site. Because of current eco-label protocols

and discussions by both industry and government on this issue, use of logo and claims on wine bottles is not permitted at this time.

Wineries and vineyards can still participate in CSWA's Sustainable Winegrowing Program without applying for certification. They can complete self-assessments, attend workshops and communicate that they participate in the educational Sustainable Winegrowing Program.

Relationship with Other Programs

CSWA is also working with other certification programs to ensure that CSWA certification

is complementary with existing winegrowing certification programs and that it is cost-effective to participate in multiple programs.

Certified Pilot Program Vineyard and Winery Operations

Seventeen companies have received certification for some or all of their vineyard and winery operations after participating in a pilot program to test the certification requirements and offer feedback. They are: Clos LaChance Wines; Concannon Vineyard/Concannon Winery; Constellation Wines U.S.; Cooper-Garrod Estate Vineyards; Diageo Chateau & Estate Wines; Fetzer Vineyards/Bonterra Vineyards; E. & J. Gallo Winery; Goldeneye Winery; The Hess Collection; Honig Vineyard & Winery; J. Lohr Vineyards & Wines; Kunde Family Estate; Meridian Vineyards/Taz Vineyards; Monterey Pacific, Inc.; Roberts Vineyard Services; Rodney Strong Wine Estates; and Vino Farms.

2009 WINE COMMUNITY SUSTAINABILITY REPORT

The California Sustainable Winegrowing Alliance also presented its 2009 Wine Community Sustainability Report at the January 13 launch event in San Francisco, indicating that most of the 2004 goals have been achieved or significant progress has been made.

For participants who have self-assessed their operations against the 227 best management practices in 14 areas from the *Code of Sustainable Winegrowing Self-Assessment Workbook*, the 2009 report indicates that a majority of the 227 practices showed an improvement in average self-assessment scores since the 2004 report. The strengths of the state's industry are practices for viticulture, soil management and ecosystem management. Areas identified as opportunities for improvement include energy efficiency, materials handling, waste reduction and environmentally preferred purchasing. Practices receiving scores in the middle ground are vineyard water management, pest management, winery water conservation and quality, human resources, neighbors and community, and air quality.

CSWA has increased participation in its Sustainable Winegrowing Program. The 1,566 California vineyard and winery organizations in the Sustainable Winegrowing Program represent a 66 percent increase in the number of wine businesses participating since the 2004 Sustainability Report. Since the program's launch in 2002, it has held 200 self-assessment workshops and 184 educational events with 9,239 workshop attendees.

Vineyard Data Comparison

	2004	2009	
Number of Distinct Vineyard Organizations	813	1,237	
Total Vineyard Acres Farmed by the 1,237 Organizations	223,971	358,121	(68.1% of 526,000 total statewide acres)

Winery Data Comparison

	2004	2009	
Number of Distinct Winery Organizations	128	329	
Total Winery Cases Produced by 329 Organizations	145.6M	150M	(62.5% of 240 million total statewide cases)

In addition to releasing a second edition and web-based version of the *Code of Sustainable Winegrowing Self-Assessment Workbook* in 2006 and targeted education events, CSWA has developed new resources and tools to further disseminate useful information on sustainable winegrowing practices, including the following, all of which are available online at www.sustainablewinegrowing.org.

- o Sustainable Winegrowing Program Web Site
- o Sustainable Winegrowing Highlight Newsletters
- o *International Wine Industry Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Protocol and Accounting Tool*
- o *Biodiversity Conservation Practices in California Vineyards: Learning from Experiences*
- o *Comprehensive Guide to Sustainable Management of Winery Water and Associated Energy*
- o *Reducing Risks through Sustainable Winegrowing: A Growers' Guide*
- o *Vineyard Management Practices and Carbon Footprints*
- o *Understanding Adoption and Impacts of Sustainable Practices in California Vineyards*

The full 2009 Wine Community Sustainability Report is available online at www.sustainablewinegrowing.org/sustainabilityreports.php. In addition, a three-minute video providing overall background on California's sustainable winegrowing practices can be viewed and downloaded in various formats at: http://inr.mediaseed.tv/EcoWine_36816.

Wine Institute and the California Association of Winegrape Growers are the primary funders of the California Sustainable Winegrowing Alliance, and have received additional support from American Farmland Trust, the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA's) Natural Resource Conservation Service, USDA's Risk Management Agency, California's Department of Pesticide Regulation, the California Department of Food and Agriculture, Pacific Gas and Electric Company, and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation.

The next Sustainability Report will be published in 2014.

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