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MEDIA RELEASE

R00184
30 August 2016
Brock University – Communications & Public Affairs

Monitoring program returns as Niagara’s wine industry prepares for harvest

Researchers at Brock University’s Cool Climate Oenology and Viticulture Institute (CCOVI) are helping Niagara’s grape growers and wineries navigate the impact the hot, dry summer has had on their crops.

CCOVI’s preharvest monitoring program returns this week for a seventh harvest season, tracking key indicators of fruit ripeness across the Niagara Peninsula.

“It’s one of the driest years we’ve seen and it is hard to predict the impact of that on fruit development,” says CCOVI viticulturist Jim Willwerth. “In years like this with extreme weather, the preharvest program really helps growers understand how the conditions are impacting their vineyards and assists wineries with their harvest decisions and winemaking practices.”

Each week until the varieties are harvested, Willwerth and CCOVI oenologist Belinda Kemp collect samples at four sites across the Niagara region, tracking the most popular Niagara varieties – Chardonnay, Riesling, Cabernet sauvignon, Cabernet franc and Pinot noir.

Once the samples return to Brock, sugar levels, titratable acidity, pH and volatile acidity are measured by CCOVI’s Analytical Services team and are posted on the [program’s website](#) each Tuesday.

The data is available to the industry through an interactive website that lets users compare varieties and vintages at different sites across the region. This allows users to compare current numbers to previous harvests in order to put

the data into context. Researchers expect a higher level of interest in the data this year due to 2016's growing conditions.

Last year, the online database received more than 1,500 page views with people in 38 countries checking in to see how Niagara's harvest was progressing.

[CCOVI's Analytical Services](#) also offers grape or juice testing for any grower or winery interested in having their own samples tested.

Click to view the [preharvest monitoring data](#) and to learn more about [CCOVI's Analytical Services](#) team.

For more information:

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