

BROCK UNIVERSITY

MEDIA RELEASE

R00080

August 30, 2010

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Wine grape preharvest monitoring tells the story

As Niagara grape growers prepare to begin the 2010 harvest, Brock's Cool Climate Oenology and Viticulture Institute (CCOVI) together with the Grape Growers of Ontario are already tracking the progress of this year's wine grape ripening.

Over the coming weeks, CCOVI viticulturist Jim Willwerth will conduct ongoing grape sampling and analysis at several locations in Niagara, tracking key factors that help determine the quality of grapes coming off the vine this year.

As the industry approaches the harvest season, CCOVI recognizes the need of grape growers and winemakers to have up-to-date information on grape development across different sectors of the Niagara region. Grapes mature uniquely depending on the year, variety and terroir. As a result, preharvest monitoring is crucial for the industry when making harvesting decisions that dictate grape and wine quality.

Jim Willwerth will sample four of the most common vinifera wine grape varieties in Niagara – Chardonnay, Riesling, Cabernet Franc and Cabernet Sauvignon – located in four different vineyards, two on each side of the Welland Canal.

Linda Tremblay, technologist in charge of the new analytical laboratory at CCOVI, will test the grape samples in terms of sugar, pH, titrable acidity and volatile acidity.

This information will be incorporated in weekly reports that will be posted on the CCOVI website at brocku.ca/ccovi and also available through the OMAFRA website at apps.omafra.gov.on.ca/scripts/english/crops/agriphone/article.asp?ID=1891. This data will help growers and processors determine when the time is best for grapes to be harvested.

"This service will allow for information to be shared among grape growers and winemakers," says CCOVI Director Debbie Inglis. "and is an example of how CCOVI works together with growers and wineries to meet their needs"

Willwerth was hired this summer to help CCOVI support grape growers and winemakers with applied research and outreach focused on priorities identified by the industry. The CCOVI Analytical Services lab opened its doors in March of this year. This initiative is part of the \$1.4 million in funding under Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada's (AAFC) Developing Innovative Agri-Products initiative, which supports industry-led research and innovation and is part of CCOVI's heightened emphasis on outreach to the grape and wine industry.

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