

Queensland 'Vineyard Walks' – bringing growers together

As part of the Queensland Wine Industry Action Plan developed by the Queensland Government and the Queensland Wine Industry Association, many wine growers throughout the state's growing regions now have the opportunity to work together for the benefit of the state's wine industry. By working closely with regional associations many growers benefit from spending time with their colleagues who have the same goals...to continuously improve local growing practices and resultant wine quality. An important medium facilitating growers' interaction are the 'Vineyard Walks', conducted periodically throughout the year. Vineyard walks entail a visit to the vineyard of a grower and the discussion of a topical issue pertinent to vineyard management at any given time of the season, and expert presenters are also invited to speak to the grower group. Vineyard walks are coordinated by Mark Deegenars, the Wine Industry Development Officer for the Department of Employment, Economic Development and Innovation.

One recent vineyard walk in the Scenic Rim Region conducted a focus on chemical selection and improved spray application, with invited speakers including local agricultural suppliers and chemical sales representatives. An informative presentation by Eleanor Nolan from NuFarm was well received.

Key topics Eleanor discussed during the session focused on maintaining a protectant disease control program, highlighted by the wetter than normal conditions across much of Australia in recent months. Nufarm's fungicide program developed for the grape industry, 3 2 1 comprising of the use of Cabrio and Filan fungicides when used together offer complementary activity on the three diseases that affect Australian grapevines, and can devastate yield and quality. In addition to this, the advantages of Duwett to help growers achieve superior coverage and deposition of fungicide, ensuring improved protection and disease control were discussed. Particularly where the reduction of product pooling around the berries can be achieved and allowing the reduction in spray volumes of up to 25% of dilute volume spraying.

This was followed by a walk in the vineyard during which participants had the opportunity to see the management practices in a vineyard other than their own. Over a cup of coffee growers had the opportunity to discuss and compare with others the important issues they were experiencing in their own vineyards at this

time of the year. Representatives from the University of Southern Queensland and wineries from other regions were also on hand to assist with questions.

The Gold Coast Hinterland group of growers had more of an intensive vineyard walk with 3 vineyards visited in the one morning. Discussions included pest and disease control using Integrated Pest Management and the 'softest' chemicals available, along with a tour of the recently opened Queensland Wine Centre on Mt Tambourine.

Speakers from the Biological Farmers of Australia, Land Care and a number of agrochemical suppliers were invited to attend a vineyard walk on the Granite Belt . This group focussed on environmental land management, 'sucker' management, spray selections from flowering onward and included discussion of issues surrounding spray choices for the domestic versus the export market and spraying in a wet season where vineyard access may be limited.

At all vineyard walks Mark Deegenars stressed to growers the next to have a dynamic spray program and not rely on previous years chemical controls. It was also reiterated that the APVMA's restrictions on 'Carbendazim' means it is no longer a tool in a winegrowers management program.