



Mark Deegenaars (left) with chief winemaker for Ballandean Estate Dylan Rhymer, during a vineyard walk held last spring at Golden Grove Estate, just west of Ballandean.

## Queensland 'vineyard walks' — bringing growers together

By Ursula Kennedy<sup>1</sup>  
and Mark Deegenaars<sup>2</sup>

As part of the Queensland Wine Industry Action Plan developed by the Queensland Government and the Queensland Wine Industry Association, many growers throughout the state's wine 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 for 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. Expert presenters are also invited to speak to the grower group. Vineyard walks are coordinated by Mark Deegenaars, wine industry development officer for the Department of Employment, Economic Development and Innovation.

One recent vineyard walk in the Scenic Rim region focussed 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.

Eleanor focused on the importance of maintaining a protectant disease control program, underlined by the wetter-than-normal conditions across much of Australia in recent months. Nufarm's fungicide program 3 2 1, developed for the grape industry, comprises the use of Cabrio and Filan fungicides. Eleanor said that when used together, they offered complementary activity on the three diseases that can affect Australian grapevines and devastate yield and quality. In addition to this, Eleanor discussed the advantages of Duwett in helping growers achieve superior coverage and deposition of fungicide, ensuring improved protection and disease control. Where a reduction in product pooling around berries can be achieved, it was possible for spray volumes to be cut by up to 25% of dilute volume spraying, she said.

Eleanor's presentation 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 a more intensive vineyard walk with three properties visited in the one morning. Discussions included pest and disease control using integrated pest management (IPM) and the 'softest' chemicals available, and were accompanied by 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 Deegenaars stressed to growers the need 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 winegrower's management program.

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