

**KENTUCKY GRAPE & WINE COUNCIL**  
**October 15, 2014**  
**KDA Office of Marketing**  
**Frankfort, KY**  
**1:00PM**



**MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE:**

REPRESENTING WINERY OPERATORS:	DENNIS WALTER
REPRESENTING GRAPE GROWERS:	JENNY BEETZ
REPRESENTING WINERY OPERATORS:	LOGAN LEET
REPRESENTING WINERY OPERATORS:	ANN KARSNER
REPRESENTING KY DEPT OF AGRICULTURE:	KRISTEN BRANSCUM
REPRESENTING CITIZEN AT LARGE:	ROGER LEASOR
REPRESENTING CITIZEN AT LARGE:	ANN BAKHAUS
REPRESENTING THE UNIVERSITY OF KY:	PATSY WILSON
REPRESENTING TOURISM, ARTS & HERITAGE:	JOHN MALLOY

**MEMBERS ABSENT:**

REPRESENTING GRAPE GROWERS:	BRUCE KUNZE
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**OTHERS REPRESENTED:**

REPRESENTING THE UNIVERSITY OF KY:	DR. TOM COTTRELL
REPRESENTING THE KY WINERIES ASSOC.:	NEIL VASILAKES
REPRESENTING HOUSE DISTRICT 40:	REP. DENNIS HORLANDER

**Call to Order**

Chairman Dennis Walter called the meeting of the Kentucky Grape & Wine Council (KGWC) to order at 1:11 pm. Those present introduced themselves. Mr. Tyler Madison called the role and a quorum was confirmed.

Mr. John Malloy made a motion to approve minutes from the previous meeting. Mr. Roger Leasor seconded the motion, all were in favor and the motion passed.

Representative Dennis Horlander of the 40<sup>th</sup> District spoke briefly; providing the Council with a succinct personal background and detailing his work with the License & Occupations Interim Committee.

**Sweetness Scale Program:**

Mr. Tyler Madison reviewed the details of the previously approved Kentucky Wine Sweetness Scale project, of which design is currently underway. The scale will be comprised of two options- the first a full scale design and the second, for labels with size restrictions, will only contain the number identifying the level of sweetness incorporated into an altered version of the Kentucky Wine logo. POP literature explaining the sweetness scales will also require design and printing as well as design and implementation of a media plan. The program will launch with stickers made available to wineries to

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adhere to current bottles with the digital files of the designs accessible for future inclusion in label design.

Although only one scale of levels of sweetness will be for public consumption, the wineries will use two scales to accurately describe their wines: one for residual sugar with marked acidity and one for residual sugar without marked acidity.

The scale will range from 1-6 (1 being the driest wine and 6 being a very sweet wine). Mr. Madison will work with Dr. Cottrell to create the scales with specific measurement for wineries.

The estimated launch of the program available to wineries for use will be spring, 2015.

Mr. Neil Vasilakes suggested that the scale should incorporate a completely dry wine as being less than 0.2% RS as opposed to the previously suggested scale incorporating anything under 1% RS as dry, a sentiment echoed by Chairman Walter and Mrs. Ann Karsner. Mrs. Karsner also suggested that the words, "Dry," and "Sweet," on either ends of the scale should be more prominent to ensure the intent is clearly decipherable to consumers.

Mr. Logan Leet mentioned that the wineries need to have a recommended procedure guide of sorts for measuring sweetness and acidity.

Mr. Vasilakes noted that a course in measuring residual sugar would be a suitable topic at the upcoming 2015 Kentucky Fruit & Vegetable Conference.

**Voluntary Quality Assurance Program:**

In explaining the impetus behind the KGWC wishing to pursue the creation of a Voluntary Quality Assurance Program, Mr. Madison relayed that the biggest hurdles he faces when speaking with people/retailers about Kentucky Wine are: Perception of inferior quality of local wines by wine consumers, bottle price vs. quality vs. perceived quality and ignorance or arrogance in terms of wines produced from hybrid/native grapes

Quality Assurance programs are marketing tools to help assure the public that they can trust a product they've not tasted prior to purchase and have proven very successful for emerging wine regions around the world.

Mr. Leasor noted that there are bad wines California but they generally don't make it outside of California so the perception in Kentucky is that California wines are of high quality. Eventually there will be a filter when Kentucky wines make it to markets further afield, but currently the Kentucky consumer is tasked with a bit of a gamble if they don't know much about Kentucky wines and want to purchase a bottle in a retail location. If that consumer happens to select a bottle with high levels of Volatile Acidity or Brettanomyces, they may not know what those faults are but they're probably not going to purchase another bottle of Kentucky wine.

Mr. Vasilakes mentioned that he could understand the benefit of such a program for wines sold in retail locations but that it would be less useful for wines only sold out of the tasting room. Mr. Leasor agreed, noting that employees in retail locations typically don't possess the knowledge to recommend a Kentucky wine but a Quality Assurance stamp would be incredibly helpful to both retail employees and customers.

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Mr. Madison stated that nearly every similar program includes: Analysis of alcohol, Volatile Acidity and total SO<sub>2</sub>. More obvious faults are almost always detected by a sensory evaluation; often on a 20 point score card (typical passing scores ranges from 10-15). The sensory analysis is a huge cost savings compared to testing for faults such as excessive levels of brettanomyces.

Mr. Vasilakes noted that everyone has different tastes and that many of the wineries (Kentucky Wineries Association members) are opposed to a sensory evaluation. Another point of concern from the wineries is the potential cost of lab tests.

Dr. Tom Cottrell reported that an initial estimate with a local lab quoted approximately \$100.00 to test for alcohol, volatile acidity and total SO<sub>2</sub>. Mr. Madison said that from what he has researched costs of programs tend to vary between \$50 per entry in Ohio (remaining costs covered by Ohio Grape Industry Committee) and \$1,000 per year in Ontario with program funded by nickel levy per liter of wine. Research needs to be carried out to determine potential costs.

Mr. Malloy suggested that a full proposal of costs, testing and administrative requirements should be drafted and presented to the wineries for approval and reaction before any decisions are made. All in attendance agreed to this point and Mr. Madison said that he would begin work on said proposal. Mr. Leet and Mrs. Karsner said that they would be willing to assist, as did Dr. Cottrell.

Mrs. Karsner suggested that test results should only be made available to the winery that submitted them and the winery should then be able to present a positive result to the Quality Assurance Board to show a wine as passed the minimum testing standards in order to retain privacy and confidence. Mr. Malloy added that the board should receive monthly analytics as to the number of submissions and pass rate.

#### **Touring & Tasting Magazine/Digital Proposal**

Mr. Madison presented a recent advertising proposal from Touring & Tasting Magazine. He noted that he had worked with the magazine a fair amount through the Wine Tourism Conference over the recent years. Aside from the west coast wine regions: Traverse City, Virginia, Georgia & New York have been prominently featured in the magazine. The proposal includes both a print and digital component that would focus on a feature article about Kentucky as an emerging wine region. The digital component is constructs a page with links to the Kentucky Wine website, content, photos, etc. Total cost is \$8,900. Mr. Malloy added that we could use this opportunity to market more wine trails. Mrs. Karsner added that she would like to see something about Kentucky Wine on a national scale. A motion to approve the proposal to Touring & Tasting Magazine in the amount of \$8,900.00 was made by Mrs. Ann Karsner. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Patsy Wilson, all voted in favor and the motion passed.

#### **Adjournment**

There being no further business to discuss, Chairman Walter made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 3:08 pm.