



SPECIAL PROMOTIONAL SECTION

Sonoma County Winegrowers' 2nd Annual Sustainability Report

JANUARY 2016

A comprehensive report on Sonoma County Winegrowers' commitment towards making Sonoma County the nation's first 100% sustainable winegrowing region by 2019.

**SONOMA
COUNTY
WINEGROWERS**

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ABOUT US....

Sonoma County Winegrape Commission

The Sonoma County Winegrape Commission, also known as Sonoma County Winegrowers (SCW), was established in 2006 as a marketing and educational organization dedicated to the promotion and preservation of Sonoma County as one of the world's premier grape growing regions. SCW has oversight by California Department of Food and Agriculture which supports producer regions. With more than 1,800 growers, SCW's goal is to increase awareness and recognition of the quality and diversity of Sonoma County's grapes and wines through dynamic marketing and educational programs targeted to wine consumers around the world.

MISSION

The mission of the Sonoma County Winegrowers is to increase the value of Sonoma County winegrapes and to nurture and protect this agricultural resource for future generations.

Sonoma County Winegrowers Named a 2015 Game Changer by Northbay BIZ Magazine



NORTHBAY BIZ MAGAZINE, DUNCAN GARRETT

VALUES

Sonoma County Winegrowers are **family farmers** who work hard every day to produce **high quality grapes** that are the **foundation** for **world class wines**. We are dedicated to **sustaining our land** for future generations. We preserve the land **where we live and work** and the **water and air that we share with neighbors**. We actively **support our communities** and are **proud to be a part of Sonoma County**.

STEWARDSHIP. INTEGRITY. COLLABORATION.

Letter from the Chairman *By Kevin Barr, Redwood Empire Vineyard Management Company*

AS CHAIRMAN OF the Sonoma County Winegrape Commission and co-owner of the first vineyard management company in California to be certified sustainable, I am proud to be part of a passionate, dedicated group of grape growers who are committed to helping Sonoma County become 100% sustainable by 2019. Over the past two years, our local wine community has embraced this bold goal and worked very hard to ensure we succeed. The cost, time and effort required for sustainability is significant, yet our grape grower community has come together to collaborate and support one another. As a result, we are seen as leaders in the wine world and we have received strong support locally from our neighbors, community and business leaders, and elected officials for our shared values and positive impact on the local economy, our employees, and



Leading by example, Kevin Barr's vineyard management company is certified sustainable. Proudly displaying their new Sonoma County sustainability vineyard sign is (l to r): Tyler Klick, Linda Barr, Kevin Barr, SCW Sustainability Manager Robert LaVine, and SCW Sustainability Committee Chair Dan Rotlisberger

the preservation of agriculture.

With regard to reaching 100% sustainability, we are well ahead of our projections. It is gratifying to see our momentum increase over time. Our growers, many who have been practicing sustainable farming techniques for years, are engaged in the process and are assessing their vineyards at a rapid pace. The hiring of a Sustainability Manager, creating a voucher program to lower the cost of

certification, and the benefits being realized from a sustainable farming approach, all help ensure that our goal will be met.

Sustainability is a broad set of practices and this past year Sonoma County Winegrowers focused a lot of time and programs in response to the drought. We collaborated with the local business community, Sonoma County Water Agency and others to create a unique public/private partner-

ship known as the North Bay Water Sustainability Coalition to help inform and educate the public about water conservation. Many winegrape growers have also shown strong leadership by voluntarily committing to conserve water by 25% to protect four key water sheds. These efforts and our commitment to sustainability are being recognized globally, from being named a 2015 Game Changer by the Northbay BIZ Magazine to our President Karissa Kruse's selection as a Marshall Memorial Fellow and numerous requests of her to speak around the world about sustainability and the preservation of agriculture.

Sonoma County Winegrowers has never been an organization content with the status quo and we'll remain focused on continuous improvement. As you'll read in the pages of this report, our sustainability program requires an

incredible amount of effort, time, and dedication. We are committed to being socially responsible in how we treat our employees, neighbors and community while being environmentally-conscious in our farming and winery practices and we're committed to being economically viable as a business so that Sonoma County can continue to thrive from agriculture.

With so much progress already made in the vineyard, in the winery and in our community, we will begin to focus our efforts in the coming months on our employees.

We hope everyone in our community will celebrate our progress and support us in the years ahead.

Sincerely,
Kevin Barr
SCWC Board Chairman and
Owner of Redwood Empire
Vineyard Management Company

Defining The Goal

ON JANUARY 15, 2014 the Sonoma County Winegrowers, in collaboration with Sonoma County Vintners, announced we are committed to becoming the nation's first 100% sustainable wine region by 2019.

Since making this bold commitment two years ago, Sonoma County's grape growers and vintners have made incredible progress towards reaching our goal and have been recognized around the world for our leadership.

Although many of the region's multigenerational wine growers and winemakers have been practicing sustainable farming techniques and winemaking practices for decades, this initiative demonstrates our seriousness and strong commitment to ensuring all vineyards and wineries across Sonoma County are sustainable. It is an unprecedented commitment for a wine region and a remarkable collaboration of our 1,800 growers and 17 AVAs (American Viticultural Areas) in Sonoma County working toward one goal – ensuring that the land stays preserved in agriculture, our community of neighbors and workers are treated with respect, and our business endures providing positive economic impact to Sonoma County.

When making this commitment, we promised to be fully transparent about our progress. This comprehensive report shares the stories of our winegrower's and winemaker's path towards sustainability - their practices and the impact it has on the environment, our community and people, and the local economy.

We hope you will celebrate our efforts and join us in the bold initiative to help make Sonoma County the best place to live, work, and do business.



and winery practices, and **economically viable** as a business.

Sustainability Programs

Sonoma County has very strict standards for acceptance into their sustainability program. The programs must incorporate a triple bottom line approach and include third party certification.

Currently, Sonoma County Sustainability works with three programs:

- California Sustainable Winegrowing Alliance (CSWA)
- Lodi Rules
- Sustainable in Practice (SIP)



All three of these programs have met our strict criteria and have been vetted by environmental policy advocates, wine industry leaders, and other stakeholders. In addition, we are working with Fish Friendly Farming with a goal of incorporating them into our sustainability program in the future.

DEFINING SUSTAINABILITY

People, Planet, Profit.

Sonoma County's Winegrowers take a triple-bottom line approach to sustainable practices that measure grape growers' commitment to being **socially responsible** in how they treat their employees, neighbors, and community, **environmentally conscientious** with their farming and winery practices, and **economically viable** as a business.

How Does a Vineyard Become Sustainable?

The process starts with growers completing a vineyard self-assessment that includes a comprehensive set of 138 best practices (rated on a scale of 1-4). A plan is then developed for documenting year-over-year improvement focused on water conservation, water quality, energy efficiency, treatment of employees and neighbors, business viability and other practices.

Once grape growers complete their self-assessment, they work with an independent, third party auditor to review their assessment answers, conduct an onsite visit to their vineyard to evaluate their practices and information, and finally review their annual improvement plan. These independent auditors are environmental scientists, biologists, chemists, professors, geologists, among other environmental practice areas, and are trained to evaluate sustainable practices within a vineyard. If the vineyard passes their audit, they will then receive certification.

The ultimate goal is for every vineyard in Sonoma County to be certified and continuously improve.



A Letter from Congressman Mike Thompson

Dear Friends,

As the Member of Congress representing Sonoma County and co-chair of the Congressional Wine Caucus as well as a vineyard owner, it is my distinct pleasure to convey how impressed and proud I am of the efforts of the Sonoma County Winegrowers.

Since Sonoma County Winegrowers declared it would become the nation's first 100 percent sustainable winegrowing region, the wine world has listened, learned and is now following your lead. The progress made to date is remarkable and reflects the strong partnership involving Sonoma County's grape growers and winemakers. Their leaders have traveled across the U.S. and around the globe sharing their sustainability commitment with government, business, and wine industry leaders, and inspiring others to become involved in



sustainability practices.

The example you are setting is helping lead an important national movement. Sustainability is central to our nation's wine community. It means that our land is preserved for agriculture that jobs are kept safe, that our water and air is kept clean,

and that our industry is kept strong. The wine industry generates some \$162 billion to the U.S. economy every year and supports the equivalent of 1.1 million full-time jobs. Sustainability protects those jobs. And the example you are setting will encourage others around our country to make a similar commitment because it is good for their land, their business and the future of our industry.

In addition, as the drought has intensified over the past two years, Sonoma County Winegrowers have hosted dozens of meetings to educate grape growers on water conservation best practices and the latest vineyard innovations. These grower meetings have included leading experts, scientists, and others who shared ways to monitor and conserve water. More recently, the Sonoma County Winegrowers began collaborating with the local

business community, regional water agencies and the State Water Resources Control Board to create a unique public/private partnership known as the North Bay Water Sustainability Coalition to help inform and educate the public about water conservation. And in August, Sonoma County's winegrape growers voluntarily committed to conserve water by 25% from 2013 levels consistent with the required reductions associated with rural residential water use in the four key water sheds – Mark West Creek, Green Valley Creek, Dutch Bill Creek and Mill Creek.

Sustainable farming and continuous improvement reflects the values of Sonoma County and its landscape of multigenerational family farmers and businesses. The vineyards provide the green, open, rural landscape that everyone finds so appealing. More importantly, a

viable wine industry is critical to our county's economic productivity. It provides Sonoma County with more than 54,000 jobs, \$1.4 billion in local, state and federal taxes and a \$13.4 billion economic impact while contributing more than \$25 million to local charities and community groups. Because of the wine industry, the hospitality, food, tourism and retail industries continue to grow and prosper. And, because of the wine industry, our children and young people are able to remain in the county to purchase homes, pursue careers and raise families.

I know the coming year will see more significant announcements and continued leadership by Sonoma County Winegrowers. I wish you all the best.

Sincerely,
Mike Thompson
Member of Congress

A Game Changing Year!



TWO YEARS AGO, the Sonoma County Winegrowers put a stake in the ground when we vowed to become the first 100% sustainable winegrowing region in the country. Our announcement was historic and generated media coverage around the globe. Last year, our commitment to sustainability deepened when we introduced our 100 year plan to preserve agriculture in Sonoma County for generations to come. While we never fully understood the impact of our pledge when we started this journey, we did realize that sustainability was and remains the right thing to do for our community, our businesses and our environment.

Thanks to the efforts of our Board of Directors and our grower members, our accomplishments in two years are many and meaningful:

- Over **64% of the vineyards** in Sonoma County have gone through sustainability self-assessment, representing roughly **37,392 acres**.
- More than **48% of the vineyards** in

Sonoma County are certified sustainable by a third party auditor.

- We introduced our **100-year business plan to preserve agriculture**, which is the first of its kind in agriculture and the global wine industry. It is designed as a living document which will be executed through both annual and five-year benchmarks that will identify transformational opportunities for collaboration and seek partnerships with a variety of groups including agricultural, business, community and education as well as government leaders.
- Sonoma County Winegrowers partnered with local businesses, community groups and government agencies on a collaborative effort called **the Sonoma County Water Sustainability Coalition** to share water conservation practices and education utilized by our grape growers to reduce water use.
- Many Sonoma County winegrape grow-

ers made a **voluntary commitment to conserve water by 25%** from 2013 levels consistent with the required reductions associated with rural residential water use in four key water sheds in response to the ongoing drought.

Make no mistake, our success would have never been realized without the incredible vision and constant support of our Board of Directors. Not only did they embrace the idea of 100% sustainability, they continue to step up to meet every challenge and leverage every opportunity to ensure we reach our objective.

This past year, with the support of our Board of Directors, I had the privilege of representing Sonoma County and our wine community as a Marshall Memorial Fellow. It is a flagship international leadership development program which grants fellowship awards to leaders from all sectors, including business, government, and civil society. As the only

Continued next page

Acknowledgements

This report could not have been produced without the support of the following people:

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STAY CONNECTED

Keep informed of the latest news, information, and updates on our sustainability initiative.

WEBSITE: www.sonomawinegrape.org

FACEBOOK.COM/sonomagrappes

TWITTER.COM/sonomagrappes

INSTAGRAM.COM/sonomacountywinegrowers

wine and agriculture representative in the program and first person ever from Sonoma County, I was able to build awareness, educate and garner support on the global stage for the sustainability leadership of Sonoma County's winegrowers.

Today, as witnessed on my travels, Sonoma County is recognized as a global leader in the wine industry on sustainability. Whether in Brussels, Spain, France, Pennsylvania, Washington, D.C. or Sacramento, I am continually met by people who tell me they have read or heard about our efforts and are modeling similar sustainable approaches in their corner of the world. The eyes of the wine world are upon us, observing our efforts and anticipating our next announcement.

Most importantly, for the first time ever, Sonoma County's winegrowers now have the ability to engage, inform and excite consumers about our efforts both in the vineyard and in the winery. As leaders in sustainability, we have the ability to educate consumers on such diverse topics as ag preservation, water use, biodiversity, climate change and more. In 2016, we will release proprietary research that specifically measures consumer attitudes about sustainability in wine, which we can leverage



Karissa Kruse was a featured speaker at the Monterey Bay Aquarium's Sustainable Food Institute even where she spoke on a panel about the "Agriculture Blueprint for the 22nd Century," alongside Sonoma County's St. Francis Winery CEO Christopher Silva, and Civil Eats' Naomi Starkman.

to build support and increase demand for wine from Sonoma County.

Our growers and winemakers have a true love for the land in Sonoma County and a commitment to being global leaders in sustainability. They are innovators, stewards, and collaborators. I look forward to 2016 and an increased focus on agricultural employees and the opportunity to manage the Sonoma

County Grape Growers Foundation. I am proud to work for Sonoma County grape growers and appreciate our community's continued support in helping us become one of the world's premier wine regions.

Sincerely,
Karissa Kruse
President, Sonoma County Winegrowers

Presenting Our Sustainability Efforts

Kruse has traveled around the globe to share our sustainability commitment and results:

- Wine Visions Conference in Bilbao, Spain
- SIMEI International Congress on Sustainability in Milan, Italy
- FIVS Global Trade Policy Conference in Brussels, Belgium
- 8th Annual Wharton Initiative for Global Environment Leadership (IGEL) Conference in Philadelphia, PA
- Monterey Bay Aquarium's Sustainable Food Institute Conference
- Sonoma County Alliance
- Wine America's Wine and Grape Policy Conference in Washington, D.C.

What's Next: Strengthening Our Community

A SKILLED, HEALTHY and engaged workforce is one of the most pressing issues facing agriculture today. As global leaders in sustainability, Sonoma County grape growers are once again stepping forward to demonstrate innovation and leadership by expanding their efforts in social equity sustainability. **Sonoma County grape growers are proud to announce the January 2016 relaunch of the Sonoma County Grape Growers Foundation.** Since its inception in 2002, the Sonoma County Grape Growers Foundation has focused on employee education and safety. In December of this year, the Board of Directors for The Winegrape Commission and Grape Growers Foundation joined together in pursuit of having the most significant impact possible on the lives of agriculture employees here in Sonoma County. This partnership resulted in a decision by both Board of Directors to have the Grape Growers Foundation managed by the Sonoma County Winegrape Commission with a joint commitment to social equity by supporting the skilled workforce that sustains agriculture in Sonoma County.

Sonoma County grape growers recognize this is a community

responsibility and remain committed to developing strong partnerships with many of the community and government based organizations already in existence. The Sonoma County Grape Growers Foundation will work in conjunction with key partners to provide resources and support for agricultural employees and their families. The Foundation will bridge the gap between the programs in existence and the individuals who should benefit from them. It will leverage existing programs by connecting programs and resources with agriculture employees and their families in four key priority areas: **Healthcare, Affordable Housing, Childcare and Education.**

Additionally, the Foundation will create and pilot new programs when a gap in services exists and a viable opportunity is identified. This leadership on behalf of the agriculture community has a goal of impacting and improving Sonoma County's agricultural residents' lives, increase farm productivity and safety and benefit the larger community. **Sonoma County Winegrape growers will become the agricultural leader in social sustainability.**

SONOMA COUNTY GRAPE GROWERS FOUNDATION

We are proud to announce the relaunch of the Sonoma County Grape Growers Foundation.

The Vision: Sonoma County Winegrape growers will become the agricultural leader in social sustainability.

The Model: Visionaries, Collaborators, Connectors & Community Enhancers

1. Provide leadership on behalf of the agriculture community
2. Provide opportunities to connect the agriculture workforce with existing programs and funds
3. Provide resources and support to leverage existing programs and increase resources and support for agriculture employees and their families
4. Create and pilot new programs if/when there is a gap and a viable opportunity is identified

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:

1. Healthcare
2. Affordable Housing
3. Childcare
4. Education

**SONOMA
COUNTY**
GRAPE GROWERS FOUNDATION

Sonoma County Winegrowers Sustainability Report

On January 15, 2014, the Sonoma County Winegrowers announced a bold commitment to become a 100% sustainable wine region by 2019. Since the last report, Sonoma County's vineyards and wineries have made significant progress towards reaching that goal.

Sonoma County Sustainable Vineyards By Acreage

58,280 Vineyard acres in Sonoma County (bearing)¹

64% Vineyard acres sustainably self-assessed (37,392 acres)²

48% Vineyard acres certified sustainable by a third party audit (27,761 acres)²

1: These figures are based on 2014 Sonoma County Agricultural Commissioner's Crop Report

2: Survey of vineyard owners conducted by Sonoma County Winegrape Commission and accepted third party certification programs, including CSWA, Lodi Rules, and Sustainable in Practice (SIP)

In addition to third party certification programs, many grape growers also participated in environmental specific programs.



18,780 acres
Fish-Friendly Farming:
Sustaining water quality and habitat²
These include 68.2 miles of creek and 19.6 miles of river.



1,171 acres
National Organic Program:
Farming to national organic standards²



240 acres
Demeter USA:
Biodynamic® farming practices²

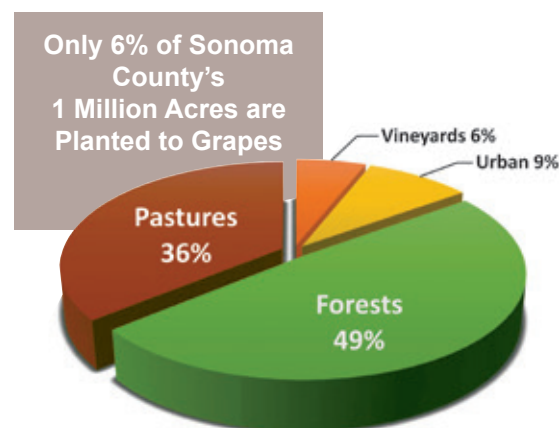
** These figures are based on an independent 2014 survey conducted by Sonoma County Winegrape Commission that represents approximately 35,605 acres of vineyards in Sonoma County and data collected by these individual environmental specific programs.

Diversified Agriculture

Based on a 2014 independent survey of grape growers representing 35,605 acres planted to vineyards, these growers also reported that they farm an additional

8,639 acres
of other agricultural crops and pastures

including almonds, figs, hay, hazelnuts, lavender, limes, oranges, pears, and walnuts.



Ag By the Numbers:

80% Sonoma County vineyards that are 100 acres or less

40% Sonoma County vineyards that are 20 acres or less

71% Sonoma County farms that are 50 acres or less

The March Towards Sustainability in 2015

75 Million Consumers reached from media stories

175 Feature Stories written about our sustainability efforts in 2015

313 Number of Sonoma County Sustainable vineyard signs distributed to growers in 2015

1280 Total number of grape growers who attended sustainability workshops, meetings, and other related events

35 Total number of sustainability workshops and meetings hosted by Sonoma County Winegrowers in 2015

54 Number of individual grape grower self-assessments assisted by SCW Sustainability Manager Robert LaVine

36 Number of community and global presentations on sustainability given by Sonoma County Winegrowers

162,340 Pounds of vineyard material that growers recycled in 2015

3 Pillars of Sustainability: PEOPLE, Planet, Profit.

PEOPLE, Planet, Profit.

Sonoma County's winegrowers and winemakers take a triple-bottom line approach to sustainable practices that **measures their commitment to being socially responsible in how they treat their employees, neighbors, and our community.**

More than 85% of the vineyards in Sonoma County are family owned, and a majority have

been farming for 3-4 generations spanning over 100 years. Over the course of this time, Sonoma County grape growers have been fortunate to employ some of the country's most talented, skilled, hardworking, and devoted employees. They are the heart and soul of our vineyard businesses, and they've enriched the culture and sense of community throughout Sonoma County. It's important that we invest in their well-being and career development, as well as nurture the next generation of farmers.

In addition to a focus on environmental stewardship and the preservation of agriculture, **Sonoma County's sustainability program focuses on each vineyard's practices related to social equity.** Under Sonoma County's sustainability program, winegrowers follow **21 comprehensive best practices focused on a wide variety of social practices.** To fulfill the social equity requirements of Sonoma County's sustainability program, growers assess, analyze and are rated (on a scale of 1 to 4)

on their human resource practices and contributions to the community. Each practice is scored and winegrowers are required to either adopt new practices or improve upon existing ones. **The social equity requirements cover topics such as employee training and development, healthcare benefits, communication with neighbors, community involvement, positive contributions to the community and industry, charitable giving, participation in industry initiatives, and many more.**

This section features grower profiles detailing their social equity sustainable practices focused on their employees, neighbors, and our community. Each profile will be accompanied by actual assessments taken directly from the Code of Sustainable Winegrowing that pertain to that best practice topic. You will see exactly what grape growers are asked to assess and some statistics that showcase Sonoma County grape grower's sustainability efforts on those critical social equity practices.

CALIFORNIA

The California Sustainable Winegrowing Alliance (CSWA) was established in 2003 to assist growers and vintners with the implementation of sustainable winegrowing practices and to ensure that the California wine industry is recognized as a global leader in sustainable winegrowing. CSWA uses the California Code of Sustainable Winegrowing workbook as the basis for the Sustainable Winegrowing Program and works in conjunction with Sonoma County Winegrowers and other regional groups to pilot new initiatives, implement sustainable practices and promote sustainable winegrowing. These sustainable practices focus on the three pillars of sustainability – People, Planet, Profit – which benefit the environment, community, and ultimately produce high quality winegrapes and wine for consumers to enjoy.

"The state's growers and vintners have been using sustainable practices for decades; however, today's California wine community has gone further, making a bold commitment to sustainability, continuous improvement and transparency, as demonstrated by the California Sustainable Winegrowing Program, and other educational and certification programs. It's exciting to see Sonoma County Winegrowers use these tools to take it to the next level, with their bold goal of 100% Sustainable by 2019," says Allison Jordan, Executive Director for CSWA. As Sonoma County Winegrowers continues on their sustainability journey, strong partnerships with organizations such as CSWA will become even more important. The relationship and dynamic between the two organizations helps foster innovations and creativity. Ultimately, by remaining flexible and piloting programs together, this partnership will make it easier for California winegrowers and wineries to implement sustainable practices and achieve sustainability certification.

SONOMA COUNTY

Sonoma County Winegrowers are committed to being good neighbors and members of the community. Throughout the year, they communicate their seasonal sustainable practices to keep the community informed of their vineyard operations.



VINEYARD EMPLOYEES

Sonoma County Winegrowers are proud to recognize our talented workforce. One of the many ways we celebrate our skilled employees throughout the year is publishing full page print advertisements in local media, such as our bilingual ad recognizing the 2015 Pruning Champions.



Creating Corporate Culture Built on Family

SPEAK TO ANY of the Jackson Family Wines' senior management team and it's abundantly clear that everything they do, whether it's in the vineyards, in the cellar, or beyond, is tied to producing the highest quality wines possible, and treating all their employees like family.

"As a family owned and operated company, we feel a responsibility to treat all our employees with dignity, respect, and ensure they have the necessary resources to succeed in their jobs," says Katie Jackson, VP of External Affairs and Sustainability and the oldest daughter of company Chairperson Barbara Banke and the late Jess Jackson. "Every business decision we make impacts our employees, so it's important that we understand everyone's point of view when creating new policies and procedures around employee development, retention, and other aspects of HR."

One of the major initiatives that Jackson Family Wines implemented recently was increasing minimum wage to \$15 an hour for its non-commissioned employees. This was a major undertaking for the company, since it impacted not only those earning minimum wage, but also those earning higher wages that would receive a wage increase based on this new pay scale.

In addition to increasing minimum wage, the company has implemented a number of other employee development programs. They launched Pathways to Success, a program that offers language classes in both English and



Katie Jackson, VP of External Affairs and Sustainability, at Jackson Family Wines.

Spanish to ensure effective communication between employees. The program also helps native Spanish speaking workers strengthen their English language proficiency. In 2015 alone, JFW employees participated in more than 14,000 hours of training courses, including classes focused on developing language, business, management and leadership skills.

Jackson Family Wines is currently developing a program that will allow every employee to give back to their local community through volunteering. Each employee will have up to 16 hours a year of paid volunteer time to use at local charities, causes, and other social advocacy initiatives that are of importance to them.

The company also conducts an annual employee survey to better understand their employee's needs and concerns. This anonymous, confidential survey includes questions that are open ended to allow for detailed feedback. One of the main takeaways over the past several years is the large number of responders who regularly cite the company's "sense of family" culture as a major reason for working at Jackson Family Wines. As a result, Jackson Family Wines was named as one of the 2015 Best Places to Work in the North Bay by the *North Bay Business Journal*.

This focus on creating a company culture can help a growing company still feel small and at home in Sonoma County.

Creating Open and Positive Dialogue

A LONGTIME AND active member of the community Mark Houser cares deeply about making positive contributions and building relationships with his neighbors. Farming 300 acres in Alexander Valley, Houser encourages open dialogue with his neighbors and welcomes their questions if they are unsure about what is occurring in the vineyard.

"It's all about keeping the lines of communication open and building dialogue among everyone connected to that vineyard – neighbors, schools officials, parents, and vineyard employees," said Houser. This philosophy drives him to consistently go above and beyond to assure the public that what he is doing is of no harm to the people around him.

One of the vineyards Houser farms surrounds an elementary school, where he proactively communicates to educate and engage his neighbors so they see the value agriculture brings to the neighborhood, and to the students. He partners with area schools in various ways and it is not un-

common to see the local High School track team running through his vineyard during the season. In addition to providing open access to his property, Houser prepares and distributes a schedule noting all upcoming vineyard activity and has set appropriate times for tractor work near the school. This means most tractor work near the school happens in the middle of the night or after hours when no children are present.

Personally, Houser has made himself an ambassador of socially equitable practices through consistency and perseverance. His commitment to transparency and strong desire for the public to be part of the equation has gained the respect and admiration of his neighbors, school administrators, and others in the community. Houser knows many of these children will also be Sonoma County farmers and therefore the exposure they have to the vineyard and examples of strong neighborhood stewardship will help support the next generation of farmers in Sonoma County.

CODE OF SUSTAINABLE WINEGROWING IN PRACTICE

Chapter 15, Criteria 1 - Neighbors and Community Relations: Neighbors who may be affected by our operations had appropriate contact information for the vineyard and/or winery.

And the vineyard and/or winery had a process or receiving, considering, and acting upon neighbor/community comments, questions, and concerns.

And proactive efforts were made to foster good relations with neighbors and community, and to promote a better understanding of our operation and the industry.

And we communicated to neighbors and the community about our practices and sustainability commitment.

CODE OF SUSTAINABLE WINEGROWING IN PRACTICE

Chapter 14, Criteria 1 - HR Planning and Goals: The vineyard and/or winery operation had an established means or process for staying aware of human resources legal requirements;

And the vineyard and/or winery operation developed and implemented an HR plan that addressed business needs and included staffing and recruitment, training and development, employee relations, compensation and benefits, and record keeping;

And the plan included HR goals (e.g., percent employees retained, training completed, etc.)

And HR goals were monitored and results were used to refine HR policies and practices.



Hoot Owl Creek Vineyards-Alexander Valley Vineyards hosts numerous local high school cross country races on their property.

SUSTAINABILITY
PRACTICE
PERFORMANCE

77%

of assessed growers in Sonoma County made sure their neighbors know how to contact them, and made proactive efforts to foster good relations and understanding of vineyard operations

3 Pillars of Sustainability: PEOPLE, Planet, Profit.

A Culture of Continuous Improvement at Francis Ford Coppola Winery

EARLY ADOPTERS OF sustainability, Francis and Eleanor Coppola started implementing sustainable and organic practices in their winery business back in 1975. Their commitment to sustainability is unwavering and the 138 sustainable practices in the Code of Sustainable Winegrowing are much more than just “practices”. Sustainability is the dominant value driving this organization forward and it is deeply ingrained within the



Francis Ford Coppola employee submits an idea to improve their sustainability practices in their suggestion box.

company's culture.

Director of Grower Relations at Francis Ford Coppola Winery, Lise Asimont says “Safety and sustainability are the company's two essential pillars, and this philosophy begins with our leadership”. Earlier this year, Francis Ford Coppola sent an email to all Coppola employees

challenging them to come up with new ways to become more sustainable. Each employee was encouraged to submit their ideas into one of the safety and health suggestion boxes located throughout the winery and break rooms. “It really empowered everyone at the company, it told them “your opinion matters to us” says Asimont.

An internal Green Team (comprised of employee volunteers with representatives from each department) reviewed all the employee suggestions that were submitted. “The Green Team is a set of people devoted to improving the working conditions and lifestyle of employees at work through sustainable practices” says Asimont. The Green Team meets quarterly and because of their due diligence and dedication, improvements to sustainable practices are implemented swiftly. “The ship turns tight and fast,” she says. The Green Team has accomplished some amazing results, most recently eliminating plastic water bottles and bags and replacing them with Coppola branded stainless steel water bottles and recycled plastic bento boxes. Corey Beck, the company's President and Director of Winemaking, says “employees feel that they're being heard, acknowledged and responded to.”

Integrating sustainability into every dimension of the business has only benefitted the Coppola organization and its employees. In addition to the environmental impact, it has strengthened their culture and fostered the belief that each employee is important, and part of the success of their sustainability efforts.

CODE OF SUSTAINABLE WINEGROWING IN PRACTICE

Chapter 2, Criteria 1 - Integrating Sustainability into Business Strategy: The vineyard and/or winery operation has formally integrated sustainability into the business strategy (e.g., company mission, vision, values, or equivalent documents);

And these were shared with all employees and with external stake holders such as neighbors, customers and others, as appropriate;

And the strategy was implemented consistently for at least one year and revised, if necessary.

CODE OF SUSTAINABLE WINEGROWING IN PRACTICE Chapter 14, Criteria 8 - Promoting Sustainability in the Workplace: Employees relevant to the successful adoption and implementation of sustainability concepts and practices were regularly informed about the vineyard and/or winery operations sustainability efforts (e.g., group meetings, internal postings);

And we sought and implemented appropriate suggestions and ideas from employees to improve our efficiency and sustainability;

And we had a dedicated group focused on implementing efficiency and sustainable practices Or We had an incentive, bonus, or recognition program for outstanding contributions to increased;

SUSTAINABILITY PRACTICE PERFORMANCE

90% of assessed growers in Sonoma County informed employees about their sustainability efforts.

Sangiacomo Family Strives to Be an Employer of Choice

THE SANGIACOMO FAMILY is one of Sonoma County's pioneering farming families; farming since the early 20th century. They care deeply about their employees and are dedicated to being the best employer possible. They run a family business and extend this family like culture to their employees.

“A family business should treat the employees like family” says Steve Sangiacomo.

This philosophy extends itself into several business practices. Third generation farmers, Steve and Mike Sangiacomo, and their brother-in-law Mike Pucci currently run the business and they have offered a 401K retirement program to all their employees since the mid-1980's. Safety is also more than just a “policy” to them, it's a culture and a promise to their employees. Safety always comes first, and if conditions aren't safe then no one works, it's that simple.

The Sangiacomo family has instituted training programs for several job types, each with a heightened focus on protecting their employees. Awareness and education are highly stressed among the management



Some of Sangiacomo Family Vineyard's employees have worked for the company for more than 30 years.

team, and they provide employees with the appropriate resources and training to prevent any safety issues in their vineyards. Annual trainings of all kinds are required; tractor, forklift, other vehicles, as well as various vineyard practices, like pruning and harvesting. Steve and Mike are ever-connected to the training and

safety programs, continually examining their practices and looking for ways to improve. With

an open door policy, if there's any added safety measures that need to be implemented, they are addressed immediately. Sangiacomo Vineyards is a business pushed forward by the closeness between management and employee, a perpetual preeminence of education and sound usage of proper equipment and techniques.

Their care and concern for employees is visibly demonstrated on a daily basis, and in return, many of their employees have worked for them for more than 40 years, including the second generation for some families. This sustainability practice proves that that when you take care of your employees, they take care of you.

CODE OF SUSTAINABLE WINEGROWING IN PRACTICE

Chapter 14, Criteria-5 - Safety Training: The vineyard and/or winery operation conducted frequent (at least quarterly) employee safety and training meetings as the year progressed and safety issues changed.

And we conducted safety audits and investigations as needed.

And we conducted tailgate trainings as needed and tasks assessments when conditions changed.

And we documented safety training session dates, attendance, and solicited and incorporate employee feedback when appropriate.

And we established and tracked safety statistics (e.g., lost-time accidents, cost/benefit analysis).

SUSTAINABILITY PRACTICE PERFORMANCE

86% of assessed growers in Sonoma County have a safety training meeting at least annually, and conduct safety audits as needed.

Sustainability Honor Roll

7th St. Diserens Vineyard
Abbe Vineyard
Acorn Winery
Akerlind Vineyards
Alderbrook/Orsi Vineyards
 Alta Vista/Mulas Family Vineyards
 Amapola Creek Vineyards and Winery
 Anderson-Ross Vineyard
Andrews Vineyard
 Argot/The Nine's Vineyard
Armagh Vineyard
Asern Family Vineyard
 Atwood Ranch
 Baldocchi Vineyard
 Baldwin Vineyard
Balletto Vineyards
Balthazard Vineyard
Banatao Vineyard
Barrow Vineyard
 Bateman Vineyard
 Battaglini Estate Winery
 Battle Vineyard
 Bazzano Vineyard
 Belden Vineyard
Belle Terre Ranch
Beltane Ranch
Bennett Valley Ranch
 Benovia Winery
Bevill Vineyard
Bianchi Vineyard
Big River Ranch

Bill Foss Vineyard
 Birdland Vineyards
 Bisordi Ranch and Vineyards
Black Emerald Vineyard
Black Horse Vineyard
Black Vineyard
 Blue Rock Vineyard
Boisset Family Estates
 Boriolo Vineyard
Borri North Vineyard
Borri South Vineyard
 Brereton Vineyard
Bush Crispo Vineyards
 Calegari Vineyard
 Carinalli Vineyards
 Carlisle-Carlisle Vineyard
 Carlisle-Dos Acres Vineyard
 Carlisle-Montafi Vineyard
Catherine Bonneau Vineyard
Centurion Vineyards
 Cisne Vineyard
 CK Vineyard
Cole Creek Vineyard
Colibri Vineyard
Comstock Vineyard
Comstock Wines
Constellation Brands Vineyards
 Cornell Vineyards
 Cox Vineyard
 Coyote Crest Vineyards
 Cunningham - Perini VINEYARD

Dairyman Vineyard
 Darden Vineyard
 Dayton Vineyards
 DeBenedetti Vineyard
 DeBurca Wines
 Degrange Vineyard
 Delaney/Sobieski Vineyard
 DeMeo Vineyard
Dempel Vineyards
Diageo - California
 Diageo Chateau & Estate Wines
 DNA Vineyards
Domaine Carneros
 Dow Vineyard
Draxton Vineyard
Dry Creek Vineyards
 Drystack Vineyard
Duste Vineyard
 Dutton Ranch Vineyards
E & J Gallo Winery
Eagan Vineyards
 Eckert Vineyard
 Eco Terreno Vineyard
 Ed's Ranch
Ellis Alden Vineyards
 Elsbree Vineyard
 Emmyline Ann
 F and L Rebottaro Ranch
 Fairview Vineyard
 Farrow Ranch
Ferrari Carano Vineyards & Winery

Flax Vineyard
 Foppiano Vineyards
Francis Coppola Vineyards
 Frei Vineyards
Friedman Vineyard
 Frostwatch Vineyard & Winery
Frugoli Vineyard
 Galante Russian River Vineyard
 Gantz Family Vineyards
 Gasparini/Beals Vineyard
 GB Vineyards
 Germone Hill Vineyard
 Gino's Ranch
Glen Oaks Vineyard
 GlenLyon Vineyards & Winery
 Gloria Ferrer Winery
 Goepfrich Winery
 Goodkin Vineyards
 Green Hills Vineyard
 Greywacke Vineyard
Griffen Vineyard
Griffin's Lair Vineyard
 Grindstaff Vineyard
Guiseppe Vineyard
 Hafner Vineyard
Hall Road Vineyard
Hanks Vineyard
Hanna Winery Vineyards
Hart Vineyards
 Hawk Hill Vineyard
 Hawk's Roost Ranch

Hemar Ranch
 Henderson Vineyard
 Hill Family Vineyard
 HKg Estate Wines
 Hocking Vineyard
 Hook and Ladder Winery
Hoot Owl Creek Vineyards - Alexander Valley Vineyards
Joint Venture
Horn Vineyard
 Idlespoke vineyard
J Vineyards & Winery
 J. Rickards Vineyards
 Jack Hill Vineyard
Jack London Vineyard
Jackson Ranch
 James Family Vineyard
Jemrose Vineyards
 Jim Anderson Vineyard
 Jordan Vineyard and Winery
 Joseph Swan Vineyards
Judge Family Vineyard
 Katon Vineyard
Keegan Vineyard
 Keller Estate
 Kenwood Vineyards
Keresey Vineyard
Kick Ranch
 Kiger Family Vineyards
 Kilcullen Family Vineyard
Killen Vineyard
 Kinsey Vineyard

Want to see your vineyard on this list? Contact SCW Sustainability Manager Robert LaVine to start your sustainability self-assessment. He can be reached at 707-522-5851 or Robert@sonomawinegrape.org



Westside Road, Russian River Valley



Alexander Valley Road, Alexander Valley



Circle Bar Ranch, Sonoma Valley



Dry Creek Road, Dry Creek Valley



CA Highway 128, Alexander Valley



Eastside Road, Russian River Valley

Sonoma County Winegrowers would like to recognize our grape growers and vintners who have assessed their vineyards or received sustainability certification from California Sustainable Winegrowing Alliance (CSWA), Lodi Rules, or Sustainable In Practice (SIP) since making our sustainability commitment in 2014. Those in bold are certified.

KL Barr Vineyards	Massoni Ranch Vineyards	Pleasant Hill Vineyard	Shea/Collins Vineyards	Treborce Vineyards
Knights Bridge Vineyard	Mauritson Farms Inc.	Polesky-Lentz Vineyards	Shone Farm	Treehouse Vineyards
Kobler Vineyard	McKinley Vineyard	Pony Ranch	Silver Oak Cellars	Truett Hurst Winery
Korbel Champagne Cellars	Melim Vineyard	Ponzo Ranch	Smith Vineyard	Two Brothers Vineyard
Kosta Browne	Mercer Golden Vineyard	Price Family Vineyards	Somers Vineyard	Two Dryers Vineyard
Kozlowski Family Vineyard	Merlin Vineyard	Puma Springs Vineyard	Sonoma Ag Art	Uptick Vineyards
Kuimelis Vineyards	Merry Edwards Vineyards	R.F.S. Vineyards	Sonoma Mountain Vineyard	Vadasz Vineyard
Kunde Estate Vineyards	Milvistas Vineyard	Rams Gate Vineyard	Sonoma Simco Vineyards	Valley of the Moon
La Promessa Ranch	Mounts Family Vineyard & Winery	Redwood Empire Vineyards	Sonoma-Cutrer Vineyards	Villa Aix Vineyards
Lafranchi Vineyard	Muhleman Vineyard	Reedy Vineyards	Spring Hill Ranch & Vineyard	Vimark Vineyards
Laguna Vineyard	Munselle Vineyards	Reis Vineyard	St. Francis Winery and Vineyard	Vino Farms
Lakeville Vineyards	Murray Vineyard	Ressler Vineyard	Stamos Vineyard	Vogensen/Piccetti Vineyard
Lancaster Estate	Nelson Ranch	Ricci Vineyards	Starr Creek Vineyard	Wallace Creek Vineyard
Lawer Vineyard	Newman Vineyards	Rich Kiser Vineyard	Stevens Vineyard	Wallace Ranch
Lawley Vineyards	Newsome Family Vineyards	Ricioli Bros.	Stiling Vineyard	Warnecke Ranch Vineyard
Lazy W Vineyard	Nick Leras Vineyards	Rising Star Vineyard	Stryker Sonoma	Wat Vineyard
Leahy Vineyard	Nineveh Vineyard	River Road Vineyard	Stuhlmuller Vineyard	Watson Vineyard
Lily Hill Vineyard	Nonella Vineyard	Roan Vineyard	Sundance Ranch	Weed Farms
Lindley Vineyards	Oat Valley Vineyard	Robert Young Vineyards	Sutter Vineyard	West-Pin Vineyard
Lone Star Vineyards	Oddone Vineyard	Rodney Strong Vineyards	Swayne	Westside Ranch
Los Chamizal Vineyards	Oehlman Vineyard	Ross Vineyard	Syar Family Vineyards	Wildcat Mountain Vineyards
Love Vineyard	Oliver Vineyard	Russian Hill Wine Estate	T&A Vineyards	William Selyem Winery
Lynmar Estate Winery	Olivet Vineyard	Ruxton Vineyard	TAM Vineyard	Williams Vineyard
MacDonald Vineyard	Olson Family Vineyards	S/J Vineyards	Tanuda Ridge Vineyard	Williamson Vineyard
MacLeod Family Vineyard	Olson Vineyard	Sable Ridge Vineyard	Tanya's Vineyard	Windsor Oaks Vineyards and Winery
MacRostie Winery and Vineyards	Orsi Vineyards	Salem Vineyard	Taylor Lane	Wine Creek Vineyard
Madden Vineyard	Papera Vineyard	Sanchietti Ranch	Taylor Ln Vineyard	WLR Vineyard
Maddocks Vineyard	Paradise Ridge Winery	Sangiacomo Family Vineyards	Teldeschi Ranch	Wolcott Vineyard
Magnolia Ranch	Paul Vineyard	Santo Giordano Vineyard	Three Sticks Winery	Wolf Run Vineyards
Mahoney Vineyards	Pedroncelli Farms	Sapphire Canyon Vineyard	Timber Crest Farms	Wood Rd. Vineyard
Mark Stevens Vineyard	Peline Vineyards	Schneider - Grant Ave. Vineyard	Tolay Vista Vineyards	Woods Vineyards
Martinelli Vineyards	Peters Vineyards	Sei Querce Vineyards	Treasury Wine Estates	Yellow Dog Vineyard
Mary Gallo Vineyard	Petersen Ranch	Shawn Vineyard		Yeomans Vineyard

**Survey of vineyard owners conducted by Sonoma County Winegrape Commission and accepted third party certification programs, including CSWA, Lodi Rules, and Sustainable in Practice (SIP).*





Unprecedented Private/Public Partnership to Conserve Water



A public awareness and education campaign was launched in Sonoma County in 2015 sponsored by a unique partnership involving local winegrape farmers, the business community, the Sonoma County Water Agency and the Sonoma Marin Saving Water Partnership to educate and inform the community on how to conserve and reduce water use. Named the North Bay Water Sustainability Coalition, the group has helped lead the public discussion about the drought and ways everyone in the community can do their part to conserve water.

5 OUTDOOR CONSERVATION TIPS

Even with the threat of heavy rains this winter from El Niño, it's still important that everyone stays mindful of their water use and continue to find ways to conserve water at home. This will ensure that the aquifers and groundwater are recharged after years of drought conditions.

1. Reduce each irrigation cycle by 1-3 minutes, or eliminate one irrigation cycle per week. Water only after the top inch of soil is dry.

Estimated Savings: 100-165 gallons per day

2. Upgrade to a "smart irrigation controller" that automatically adjusts watering times for hotter weather and shuts down the system when it rains.

Estimated Saving: 40 gallons per day

3. Water only in the late evening or early morning hours to reduce evaporation and interference from wind.

Estimated Savings: 20-25 gallons per day

4. Adjust sprinklers to prevent overspray and runoff, as well as repair leaks and broken sprinkler heads.

Estimated Savings: 15-100 gallons per day

5. Use a broom instead of a hose to clean driveways and sidewalks.

Estimated Savings: 8-18 gallons per day

3 Pillars of Sustainability: People, PLANET, Profit.

People, PLANET, Profit.

Sonoma County's winegrowers and winemakers take a triple-bottom line approach to sustainable practices that **measures grape growers' commitment to being environmentally conscientious with their farming and winery practices.**

More than 85% of the vineyards

in Sonoma County are family owned, and a majority of those have been farming for 3-4 generations spanning over 100 years. Many of these growers grew up on their farms and being good stewards to the soil, the environment and habitat around them is second nature. It's in their blood and they farm with the intent of passing their land onto the next generation.

Under Sonoma County's sustainability program, winegrowers follow **77**

comprehensive best practices focused on environmental stewardship and the preservation of agriculture. These environmental best practices account for more than half of the total sustainability practices required in the program.

To fulfill the environmental requirements of Sonoma County's sustainability program, growers assess, analyze and are rated (on a scale of 1-4) on the environmental impact of their farming

practices. Each practice is scored and winegrowers are required to either adopt new farming practices or improve upon existing ones. **The environmental requirements cover topics such as water conservation, ecosystem management, habitat diversity, riparian habitat, air quality, pest management, soil monitoring, energy efficiency, and many more.**

This section features grower profiles detailing their

environmental sustainability practices. Each profile will be accompanied by actual assessments taken directly from the Code of Sustainable Winegrowing that pertain to that best practice topic. You will see exactly what grape growers are asked to assess and some statistics that showcase Sonoma County grape grower's sustainability efforts on those critical environmental practices.

Grape Growers Forge Partnerships: Sharing the Water

EIGHT YEARS AGO Jackson Family Wines designed rain-capture reservoirs with the goal of providing a water supply for its vines, while also protecting the farm's functioning ecosystems. The aim was to take water when it is plentiful for use at times when it is not. The current drought, however, has opened up a new opportunity that goes beyond simply managing vineyard water use – now it's about sharing the water.

In early October, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) hosted an event at the Kendall-Jackson Wine Estate & Gardens to introduce a series of 41 Voluntary Drought Initiatives developed in partnership with the National Marine Fisheries Service. The initiatives, which mirror a regulation to residential landowners, aimed to reduce agricultural water use by 25 percent, and to initiate a reporting program that tracks progress towards that goal. More than 75 grape growing families have signed up for the agreements, which range from expanded water conservation efforts to flow releases during critical times for migrating fish, specifically juvenile Coho.

Joe Dutton, a fifth-generation farmer, has been instrumental in working with his local

neighboring farms to share ideas and practices so growers can be more water efficient. He has also played a leading role in this voluntary drought initiative.

"Our family has been farming in Sonoma County since the late 1800's and we hope to continue farming for centuries to come," said Joe Dutton. "We were proud to sign this voluntary water reduction pledge because it is important to our family to be a good neighbor and preserve the land, the watersheds and the natural habitat that makes Sonoma County so special to all who live here."

As part of the voluntary efforts, Jackson Family Wines released 7.2 acre feet of water from its Green Valley vineyard reservoir, providing water critical to sustaining the endangered Coho in that tributary.

"It's a very tough year to be a fish," said CDFW Director Charlton H. Bonham. "This drought is unprecedented. But when responsible members of the community collaborate, the solutions can be remarkable."

Jackson Family Wines also contributed \$40,000 to Trout Unlimited, which was used to fund two additional flow releases (on Dutch Bill Creek and a second on Green Valley Creek), as well as the purchase of six 5,000 gallon

tanks in Mill, Mark West, and Green Valley creeks. The tanks will help reduce the draw of water from nearby streams by allowing homeowners to capture rainwater off their roofs this winter, storing it to offset their dry

season needs when stream flow is lowest next summer.

"Conservation is a no longer just about the individual growers' use of water," said Katie Jackson, Vice President of External Affairs and Sustain-

ability at Jackson Family Wines. "These are community issues that require collaboration with neighbors, agencies and non-profits to find solutions that benefit everyone."



Green Valley Creek at Bones Road outside the town of Graton, California. Photo taken prior to Jackson Family Wines' water release.



The outlet of the pipe releasing water from the reservoir into Green Valley Creek at Bones Road



A view of the outlet pipe and the increased water levels on Green Valley Creek at Bones Road

One Grower's Quest to Maintain Her Vineyard's Diverse Eco-System



Ruth Stadnik walking among the vines of her Chardonnay vineyard.

RUTH STADNIK AND her son, Nick Brodrick grow Pinot Noir and Chardonnay along Felta Creek in the Russian River AVA, and Zinfandel and Syrah in the Dry Creek Valley AVA. Walking around their Chardonnay block, all of the thoughtful work taken to maintain not just the vineyard, but the environment as a whole is more than visible. This is how Stadnik and Brodrick live, as farmers and environmentalists, passionately concerned about maintaining the beautiful place their family has long called home, caring for it and constantly in touch with its life cycle.

Using sound practices from the Code of Sustainable Winegrowing and certified by Fish Friendly Farming since 2004, Stadnik and Brodrick focus on biodiversity, stressing indigenous species of plants, insects, flowers, and animals. On their 115 acres they have only 12.5 acres planted to vineyards, with the rest devoted

to forestry, sheep grazing, and a huge community garden for family and friends. Incredibly mindful of soil and water conservation, they walk the vineyards daily, monitoring the life of the vines and property itself. It is clear that their farming has a minimal impact on the land.

All around the vineyard are dense forests and riparian canopy providing deep shade over Felta Creek that runs through the middle of the property. It is here, along the creek's path that Ruth has worked closely with Fish Friendly Farming (FFF), protecting and enriching the natural habitat. In conjunction with FFF and the Code of Sustainable Winegrowing practices, a wide buffer along both sides of the creek has been cleared of invasive plant species like Vinca and Blackberry. Ruth explains that these plants choke out the growth of native plants, disrupt the ecosystem and do little to provide insects for the fish to eat. Once cleared of invasive plants, the team from FFF is planting and caring for dozens of native plants. Ruth hopes that restoration of native plants will restore the ecosystem and improve the overall habitat for the fish.

CODE OF SUSTAINABLE WINEGROWING IN PRACTICE

Chapter 8, Criteria 1 - Ecosystem Processes – Resource Base Ecosystem Biodiversity:

Vineyard or winery operations enhanced ecosystem biodiversity.

And Species, habitat types, and indicators of plant and animal diversity were monitored and recorded in and around the vineyard or winery.

And Measures have been taken to promote biodiversity.

SUSTAINABILITY PRACTICE PERFORMANCE

81% of assessed growers in Sonoma County with vineyard bordering riparian habitat provided a vegetated buffer strip adjacent to the waterway.

90% of assessed growers in Sonoma County were knowledgeable about most of the sensitive species that might live in and around their vineyard.



Using Cover Crop to Prevent Erosion

IN SONOMA COUNTY erosion control can be an issue even in the best of situations. Growers view topsoil as one of their most precious farming asset and make every possible effort to protect it from being washed away by winter rains.

As the Vice President of Vineyards at Ridge Vineyards, David Gates is very protective of the land and its evident in the sustainable practices he uses to prevent erosion on his vineyard. Since he farms vineyards that vary from gently sloped to steep hillside, he has developed a varied approach to each site and situation.

Gates gets excited when describing his cover cropping program. "I have discovered over the years that there are a lot of different plants to choose from and each works best in a certain situation. As I address problems on various slopes and in differing soils, I have particular seed recipes that I use to get the most control possible," he says.

In one scenario the mix is given in precise percentages of a half a dozen different grasses, legumes, and clover species. Nearby, where the slope and water flow are different, the seed

recipe is adjusted, eliminating some grasses and introducing a new clover. But still with a time tested sense of precision. Over his 30 years of farming he has become a master at using cover crop. Using grasses, legumes, clovers, and annual flowers in the vineyard strengthen the grower's hand in so many ways. They are there to slow the drop of rain before it can dislodge a grain of soil. Their roots hold the soil in place as sheets of rainwater travel to the nearest creek or river. In the spring they color and brighten the vineyard floor, providing sanctuary and food for insects beneficial to the grape vines. As tractor work starts, they carpet the vineyard and reduce dust. And finally they breakdown to feed the soil and the microbes that live in it.

Cover cropping may seem simple but there is a lot of science behind it. Cover crop helps reduce the risk of erosion, it creates more biodiversity within the vineyard, rejuvenates the soil, and improves the beautiful landscape. And with a winery like Ridge all you have to do is taste the wines to understand that his success has not stopped there.

SUSTAINABILITY PRACTICE PERFORMANCE

93% of assessed growers in Sonoma County had taken measures to reduce non-point source pollution, such as growing a winter cover crop, and reducing summer tilling.

3 Pillars of Sustainability: People, PLANET, Profit.

Building a Carbon Neutral Winery

RODNEY STRONG VINEYARDS has a vibrant and influential presence in Sonoma County, not just as a world-renowned wine producer, but also as a leader in the sustainability movement. Everything from solar energy, to reducing inputs in the vineyards, to using less glycol in the winery, the company and its owners are entirely focused on maintaining the lowest carbon footprint possible. They work with Mother Nature and are mindful not to raise their carbon footprint.

The winery's push for more carbon neutral practices started with assessment tools provided by Sonoma County Water Agency. A mandatory first step towards receiving sustainability certification from a third party auditor is to measure usage of resources. These tools provide them insight into how the company's business practices impact the environment. With this information in hand they had a clearer roadmap to reduce their carbon footprint.

One of their main priorities was reducing electricity and water usage. Through extensive reengineering in the winery, the introduction of many high tech management tools in the winery and vineyard, and retraining of both vineyard and winery staff, the company was able to dramatically shrink its carbon footprint. At Rodney Strong, wine tanks were redesigned, pumps replaced, irrigation systems upgraded,

solar power systems installed, and tractors downsized. Everyday practices and behaviors of the winemaking and vineyard staff were carefully studied. Wasteful practices were trained out and resource conserving practices trained in. Measurement and conservation are now standard operating procedure at Rodney Strong Vineyards, and ever greater reduction in resource usage is now their proud quest.

"I am proud to work for a winery so committed to reducing its carbon footprint and where the bottom line is not a dollar figure but a thriving future for us all," says April Berg, a Grower Relations Representative at Rodney Strong. "It really is a good feeling to know we are doing our part to make a difference in our community"

In 2009 Rodney Strong Winery joined the Climate Registry and was certified carbon neutral. The winery is always improving their sustainable practices, and that will continue forever. It's at the heart of Sonoma County's sustainability program and Rodney Strong Vineyards practices. They believe their efforts are producing better wines, a better environment, and a better community.



Rodney Strong's vineyard management team: Ryan Decker, April Berg, and Doug McIlroy.

CODE OF SUSTAINABLE WINEGROWING IN PRACTICE

Chapter 9, Criteria 1 - Planning, Monitoring, Goals, and Results:

An energy audit of the overall vineyard and/or winery operation was conducted in the last 5 years and was reviewed annually;

And a documented energy management plan was developed that includes elements such as lighting, pumps, tanks, refrigeration, motors, drives, etc.;

And most cost effective measures from the audit were implemented;

And total energy use was monitored and recorded throughout the year and used to calculate performance metrics for energy and greenhouse gases related to energy use;

And goals or efficiency were set for overall energy use;

And energy metrics and conservation were incorporated into an energy awareness training program for employees.

SUSTAINABILITY PRACTICE PERFORMANCE

79%

of assessed growers in Sonoma County have investigated renewable sources of energy and 19% have or have begun planning for an alternate energy source.

Measuring Plant Water Needs

FRED PETERSON AND his son Jamie are first and second generation winemakers and grape grower on the western slopes of Dry Creek Valley. Peterson believes sustainability is a balance between innovation and boots in the vineyard. "You just have to go out and look," he says. Peterson is an eager witness to each stage of growth throughout the season. By being out there he is able to see the daily transformation of the vine, its shoots, leaves, and fruit. This diligent attentiveness allows him to see the vine's progression as it draws upon the rain water stored in the soil. Peterson is an avid conservationist of everything, especially water.

As a winegrower Peterson is an expert in analyzing the vine for water stress. As a winemaker he understands that winegrape quality improves when they are gently starved for water toward the end of the growing season. He has tasted the impact over his 30 plus vintages. All the technical science in his three decade career informs him of the complex biological and chemical forces from deficit irrigation.

He customizes each vineyard site with irrigation practices in mind to grow the highest quality grapes. He says, "I go into each year expecting not to irrigate very much." This expectation comes from the careful planning he has done from early decision making about each block of grapes. Based on the soil type and depth, Peterson selected the ideal rootstock for each site. Some rootstocks impart high vigor to the vine, so he plants these in areas where the soil is weakest. Other rootstocks can weaken the vigor of the vine, so he uses these rootstocks where the soil is overly rich and excess vigor could harm grape quality. All of these early decisions when planting a new vineyard have major implications down the road, especially for irrigation needs.



On occasion, grape growers will dig a ditch between vine rows to measure soil moisture and determine whether vines require water.

When managing vine water stress, growers often use high tech measurement tools such as a pressure chamber, evapotranspiration meters, or porometer. With his deep knowledge of his vineyard, Peterson instead uses a low tech approach by understanding rootstocks, vine vigor, soil analysis, weather patterns, and other factors. It may seem, "low tech," but it's a proven, effective way to conserve water.

CODE OF SUSTAINABLE WINEGROWING IN PRACTICE

Chapter 5, Criteria 10 - Soil Moisture and Plant Water Status Monitoring methods: c4: Soil moisture monitoring devices (e.g., gypsum blocks, tensiometers, capacitance sensors, neutron probe) were used to track water availability (and/or depletion) and used to schedule irrigation for the vineyard;

And Soil moisture was measured and used to determine the start date for Spring/summer irrigation;

And Plant water status was monitored and recorded by visually or mechanically assessing shoot tips and tendrils;

And A plant water status measurement tool was used (e.g., pressure chamber, porometer, leaf temperature, or other technology).

SUSTAINABILITY PRACTICE PERFORMANCE

93%

of assessed growers in Sonoma County used soil information like water holding capacity and infiltration rate to estimate the irrigation volume needed in an irrigation.

90%

of assessed growers in Sonoma County restricted irrigation so some level of stress was applied to vine and monitored stress with instruments or for visual symptoms.

Sustainability in the Marketplace

Consumer research proves that sustainability is a global megatrend that is transforming how consumers make purchasing decisions and changing the way businesses are incorporating sustainability values that improve the environment, their employees and communities, and much more.

Consumer-Goods' Brands that Demonstrate Commitment to Sustainability Outperform Those that Don't

Recent Nielsen Global Surveys conducted earlier this year shows that consumers care deeply about sustainability and are willing to pay more for sustainable products.

Here's a snapshot from the results of their survey to more than 30,000 consumers in 60 countries.

65%

of 2014 total sales of consumer goods measured globally were produced by brands with an environmental and/or social commitment or cause.

66%

of Global Consumers Say They're Willing to Pay More for Sustainable Brands—Up 55% From 2014

62%

of Global respondents say that brand trust is on the top of their list of sustainable factors that influence their purchasing

59%

Purchase driver was the product or service's health and wellness benefits

*Source: 2015 Nielsen Global Survey of Corporate Social Responsibility and Sustainability

73%

of Millennials Say They are Willing to Pay Extra for Sustainable Offerings – Up from 50% in 2014.

MILLENNIALS IN 2015: A Retail Deep Dive

Millennials (currently ranging in age 18-34) will soon become the nation's largest living generation. They already have surpassed Generation X to make up the largest share of the U.S. workforce, and are becoming one of the most powerful and influential consumer target demographics ever. According to these Nielsen studies, Millennials won't compromise on quality. They place a

premium on authenticity – from the products they buy to their interactions with brands. In particular, Millennials value goods that are handmade and locally produced. They want to know the story, history and heritage behind the items they purchase. And they demand a connected, multi-channel shopping experience.

*Nielsen Global Survey of Corporate Social Responsibility and Sustainability was conducted February 23 – March 13, 2015 and polled more than 30,000 consumers in 60 countries throughout Asia, Europe, Latin America, the Middle East, Africa and North America.

3 Pillars of Sustainability: People, Planet, **PROFIT.**

People, Planet, **PROFIT.**

Sonoma County's winegrowers and winemakers take a triple-bottom line approach to sustainable practices that **measures grape growers' commitment to managing their business operations to ensure they are economically viable and endure long term.**

More than 85% of the vineyards in Sonoma County are family owned, and a majority of those have farmed for 3-4 generations spanning over 100 years. The

growers care deeply about protecting and preserving their land, as well as taking care of their employees, neighbors, and community that have supported their vineyard businesses for years.

In addition to the environmental and social practices, Sonoma County winegrowers also assess every aspect of their farming business decisions. It's vital to ensure Sonoma County's vineyard businesses endure long term to continue the legacy of agriculture that has defined this region for more than a century. In 2014, Sonoma County's winegrape crop accounted for approximately 66%

of the total agricultural income in the county, at \$592,798,000. A recent independent economic impact report showed that Sonoma County's wine business community employs 54,297 full time jobs locally and provides \$13.4 billion of total economic impact. Vineyards and wineries are a major economic engine for Sonoma County and we are committed to preserving it for generations to come.

Under Sonoma County's sustainability program, winegrowers follow **40 comprehensive best practices, focused on sound business decisions that**

ensures economic viability.

Each practice is scored and winegrowers are required to either adopt new practices or improve upon existing ones to ensure the longevity of their organization. To fulfill the economic viability requirements of Sonoma County's sustainability program, growers assess, analyze and are rated (on a scale of 1 to 4) on their business practices. **The economic viability criteria covers topics such as vendor relations, employee retention, long term planning, financial evaluation, succession planning, and many more.**

This section features grower profiles detailing their economic viability sustainability practices. Each profile will be accompanied by actual assessments taken directly from the Code of Sustainable Winegrowing that pertain to that best practice topic. You will see exactly what grape growers are asked to assess and some statistics that showcase Sonoma County grape grower's sustainability efforts on those critical practices to ensure their businesses succeed and endure long term.

Sonoma County Partners with Super Bowl 50 Host Committee



Sonoma County Winegrowers, Sonoma County Tourism, and Sonoma County Vintners have teamed up to be an official destination partner of the Super Bowl 50 Host Committee.

The game will be played at Levi's Stadium in Santa Clara on February 7, 2016. For the past year, we have participated in many of the events and

activities celebrating "The Big Game" coming to the San Francisco Bay Area.

As a destination sponsor, Sonoma County's wines will be poured at VIP receptions, NFL owners meetings, as well as media and major sponsor events. Sonoma County is also the only regional sponsor who will pour wines at the "Super Bowl City" fan experience, expected to

draw over a million people.

The Sonoma County Winegrowers are proud to work with the Host Committee to educate and inform the public about both organization's shared sustainability values. The Host Committee has a goal of making this sporting event the most sustainable in the history of the game. These game-changing efforts align with

the Winegrower's goal of becoming 100% sustainable

Sonoma County's marketing efforts around this major sporting event and our sustainability efforts will also include reaching out to visitors and football fans to extend their stay in Sonoma County, and connecting local businesses with potential customers.

3 Pillars of Sustainability: People, Planet, PROFIT.

A Sustainable Approach to Showcasing a Vineyard's Terroir

AS A VITICULTURIST with an extensive family background in wine growing, Justin Leigon of Piña Vineyard Management farms in a way that emphasizes the terroir of each vineyard site through the flavors expressed in each cluster of grapes.

Leigon is convinced that sustainability practices translate to memorable wines because of an emphasis on flavor development. Many vineyard sites in Sonoma County have become world renowned because of their terroir that imparts unique flavors that resonate with winemakers and wine consumers. Connecting this flavor quality to a vineyard helps create a strong brand and reputation in the marketplace for that site, building demand for those grapes by wineries and ensuring long term economic viability.

Within the Code of Sustainability, there are many best practices that help growers think and act on maintaining flavor consistency. It's a year round job. In January and February, its pruning. From May through June it's suckering and leafing. After that, there are countless other vineyard practices that help growers ensure fruit quality and the development of flavors in the grapes, such as canopy management.

"Canopy management and irrigation is huge," he says. "We're trying to manage the vine to make it a balanced vine," he affirms. It's a practice straight from the Code of Sustainable Winegrowing, Chapter 3-3:

"Leaf Removal: Leaves around the clusters were removed shortly after bloom to expose the clusters to the appropriate amount of indirect



Justin Leigon of Piña Vineyard Management

light**." (Exposure of the clusters to light is one of the most important factors in wine quality – light on the berries enhances both color and flavor.)

This also encompasses his detailed treatment of the soil with precise irrigation, everything from gravel patches to water conservation to ensure the grape flavor profiles stay consistent. Drawing from knowledge he gathered growing up surrounded by vineyards, Leigon knows the importance of constantly walking the rows, getting to know those individual vines and the vineyard as a whole better. "There's a lot of things the vines tell you," he states. He's a viticulturist who farms for a certain quality of wine but the environment is his paramount priority.

CODE OF SUSTAINABLE WINEGROWING IN PRACTICE

Chapter 3, Criteria 1 - Balanced Vine: Vineyard design (spacing, trellising, and training), and pruning, crop load adjustments, irrigation, and cover cropping were implemented successfully to keep vines in balance (see Boxes 3-A and 3-B for parameters)

And vine phenology was recorded using a method such as the modified E-L** scale, or by documenting various phenological

SUSTAINABILITY PRACTICE PERFORMANCE

72%

of assessed growers in Sonoma County balanced vine inputs and crop so growth stopped around veraison and adjusted crop on weak vines

Building Relationships That Last Generations

ALICE WARNECKE SUTRO'S family has had a presence in Sonoma County since the early 20th century, establishing a closeness with the land and the people at their namesake Warnecke Ranch and Vineyard. She values the relationships between the vineyards she farms and the wineries that buy her family's fruit.

"There's a deep mutual respect," she says. Sutro doesn't look at wineries as clients, but rather partners, all working together to shepherd the grapes from vine to bottle. Each relationship is special, professional, and "friendly", she says. Some winery partners are even considered extended family.

Ensuring a positive, successful relationship between winegrowers and winemakers is an important aspect of sustainability. It helps ensure their shared values thrive long term and across generations. From a business perspective, it's critical that grape growers have a strong relationship with their winemaker clients to ensure they maintain a healthy partnership long term and a marketplace for their grapes. In Sonoma County it's not uncommon for grape grower/winemaker relationships to span 30-40 years and multiple generations.

To ensure open and honest lines of communications throughout the process, Sutro along with her aunt Margo Warnecke Merck and their vineyard team meet often for "winemaker feedback" sessions in the field to share points of view from the wineries and grower relations teams on the quality of fruit and other aspects of the decisions made throughout the growing



Alice Warnecke Sutro explains the terroir of her family's vineyard during a tasting of wines sourced from those vines.

season. One of the single most important wine quality decisions made each growing season is when to harvest. That's why Sutro and the Code of Sustainable Winegrowing puts a high value on communication about this. With her winery partners at her side, the progress toward perfect ripeness is watched constantly until the moment to pick is determined. By practicing open lines of communication between everyone, the grapes are picked to everyone's satisfaction.

In addition, Sutro tastes and critiques wines from previous harvest with the family's winery partners. This open dialogue and feedback among all stakeholders is critical to building a strong working relationship and ensuring the quality of the grapes and the resulting wines. As partners they seek an understanding of the challenges each other faces and look for ways to continually improve the outcome. As a result, consumers get to enjoy the fruits of their labor and strong collaboration from vine to bottle.

CODE OF SUSTAINABLE WINEGROWING IN PRACTICE

Chapter 7, Criteria 4 - Tasting Wine Made from the Grapes: There was an annual meeting with each winemaker to taste and compare wine made from these grapes to other wines made with similar grapes from other vineyards in the region

SUSTAINABILITY PRACTICE PERFORMANCE

92%

of assessed growers in Sonoma County spend time in the vineyard with the winemaker or winery representative tasting grapes to assess ripeness.

76%

of assessed growers in Sonoma County taste wine made from their grapes with the winemaker to allow continual improvement in quality.

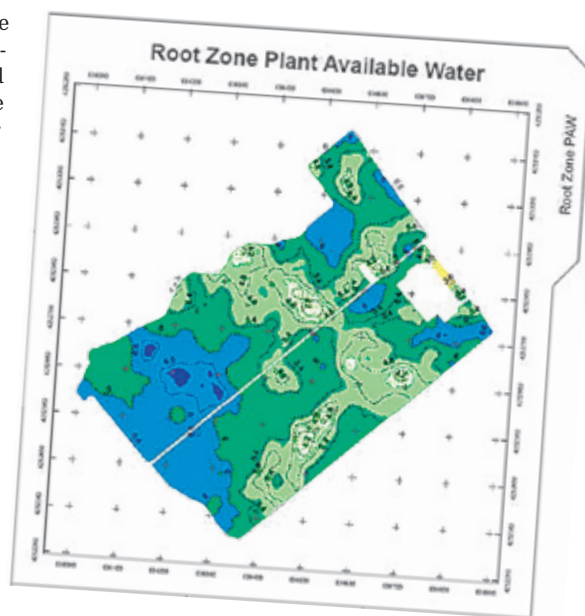
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Sustainable Farming Techniques For New Vineyard Plantings

IT'S NO COINCIDENCE that Jake Terrell works for St. Francis Winery, one of the most active and innovative wineries in sustainable farming practices. His love for sustainable vineyard management is obvious when he speaks passionately about the soils and land in Sonoma County. "I love getting to know every aspect of a vineyard site – its character, its terroir, and history," he says. "Every vineyard has a story to tell that is eventually shared in a glass of wine, so it's important we get it right from the moment we begin planting it."

Planting a vineyard is a 25-30 year commitment and major business investment in that rootstock, clone, and grape variety, so every decision is vital to the long-term economic viability. For Terrell and the entire St. Francis vineyard management team, they go to great lengths to ensure every vineyard is able to express its terroir. In order to achieve consistent quality across all his vineyards, he plants and farms every site differently.

This dedication to ensuring the character of each site is the reason why Terrell took a high tech route on their replant at the Behler Vineyard near Kenwood. Using sophisticated analytical tools to look beneath the soil surface he gained great insight into potential rooting depth, soil water holding capacity, and nutrient imbalances. With this information he was able to fine tune irrigation block layout, rootstock and grape variety choice,



and site preparation.

But his site study did not end there. Outside the vineyard footprint he also wanted to know where winter runoff would flow, the plants and animals that would live in and around the vineyard, and how his usage of the site would impact neighbors. With this information he formulated a plan to protect nearby creeks and enhance the habitat found there. In addition, he punctuates the importance of water, where it's located in proximity to the vines, and how it's used. "Site absolutely dictates the quality," he says. With the attention Terrell gives St. Francis' various vineyard sites, it's no wonder the winery continues to be so integral in the sustainability movement.

CODE OF SUSTAINABLE WINEGROWING IN PRACTICE

Chapter 3, Criteria 8 - Environmental Due Diligence: Environmental due diligence was carried out before block replanting or purchasing the land (or after deciding to convert to a vineyard) to determine both the presence of environmental features which may affect farming (see Box 3-G) and farmable acreage.

And environmental issues relevant to the site and region were researched.

And appropriate public and private entities were contacted.

SUSTAINABILITY PRACTICE PERFORMANCE

95%

of assessed growers in Sonoma County did environmental due diligence while the vineyard was being established.

Making Smart Purchasing Decisions Based on Sustainable Values

DAN ROTLISBERGER IS a 5th generation Sonoma County farmer on his family's vineyard in Alexander Valley. Through the years, he has developed and maintained strong relationships with the people who sell him farm supplies, tractors, and other tools. Rotlisberger al-

ways has a sharp pencil when it came to cost. And he doesn't plan to ever change that. Considering ROI, he uses a similar approach for ROE (Return on Environment). Thoroughly investigating the environmental impacts of a product helps him better identify and select the most environmentally-friendly products available on the market. By articulating his environmental values to vendors, they understand what



he cares about and can better source products that meet his needs.

Rotlisberger relied on these values over the past two years as the drought became a central issue throughout California. "It was important to me to try and conserve as much water as possible with the current

drought conditions," he said. "I started looking at all my vineyard practices and evaluating what innovations could make a big impact from a water conservation point of view," he added. As Rotlisberger evaluated his water uses, he realized wind machines could be a perfect alternative to using sprinklers during the freezing, winter season when vines are threatened by frost. He did independent research on wind machines and also discussed the environmental and financial implications with his key vendors.

Rotlisberger also assessed whether or not the topography and weather patterns of his vineyard sites were suitable for wind machines. Meteorologically, frost events happen for a variety of reasons. In some instances a layer of cold air gets trapped at the surface below a blanket of warm air. When this happens, Rotlisberger knew he could mix that layer of warm air with the cold surface, giving his vines just enough warmth to not freeze. "Through all my conversations with wind machine experts and my venter contacts, it was clear that my vineyard had the ideal scenario for installing wind machines," he said.

Rotlisberger purchased 20 machines to install in his family vineyard and at vineyards he manages. Wind machines now make up about 90% of the frost prevention system on his vineyard. In the last two seasons, Rotlisberger estimates on average, each wind machine has saved 240,000 gallons of water every time it has been used. These business-centric sustainability practices have helped increase his ROI and improve the environment. A win-win.

CODE OF SUSTAINABLE WINEGROWING IN PRACTICE

Chapter 13, Criteria 1 - Planning, Monitoring, Goals, and Results: Purchasing decisions were based on defined supplier criteria that included environmental attributes;

And a written purchasing policy that includes specific environmental standards was approved by owner/manager;

And environmental considerations were included in most purchasing decisions;

And alternative materials and environmental attributes of products (e.g., amount of recycled or post-consumer content, environmental certification such as Energy Star, Forest Stewardship Council) were considered in relevant purchasing decisions;

And goals were established and reviewed annually to increase the purchase of environmentally preferable products;

And suppliers and outside service providers were evaluated against comprehensive criteria including availability of environmentally preferable products and services.

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WE ARE FARMERS ALWAYS

WE ARE GRAPE GROWERS TODAY

WE BELIEVE IN PRESERVING AGRICULTURE FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS

WE SEE SUSTAINABILITY AS OUR COMPASS FOR BETTER FARMING AND BUSINESS

WE UNDERSTAND THAT HISTORY OFFERS A GUIDE TO MAKING DECISIONS IN THE FUTURE

WE BELIEVE IN CONTINUOUS LEARNING, IMPROVEMENT AND COLLABORATION

WE ARE POSITIVE CONTRIBUTORS TO OUR COMMUNITY AND INDUSTRY

WE ARE CARETAKERS OF THE LAND WE INHERITED ON BEHALF OF THOSE WHO WILL INHERIT IT FROM US

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