



CENTRAL COAST VINEYARD TEAM

Sustainable Winegrowing Update

good for the growers - good for the environment - good for the community

Summer 2008

Sustainable Ag Expo

November 13-14, 2008
www.sustainableagexpo.org

Earth Day Food & Wine Festival

April 18, 2009
www.earthdayfoodandwine.com

Member Appreciation Luau

Santa Barbara County
July 16, 2008

San Luis Obispo County
July 17, 2008

Executive Director's Report

Kris O'Connor, Executive Director

This quarter marked a clear shift in my activities and the work of our staff – which at times has been a bit uncomfortable and difficult – but in the end, it is always exciting to be part of developing and implementing new programs that support our mission and vision.

Patagonia Tools Conference

It was quite an honor to be one of the 50 invited non-profits to the annual Patagonia Tools Training for non-profits held in May at lovely Lake Tahoe. Not only was I able to network with great non-profit managers, communications experts, and savvy Patagonia staff, but the robust training addressed everything from blogging, e-commerce, fundraising, board management to strategic planning. The five day conference was both exhausting and exhilarating, and I've already integrated many of the lessons learned here at the Vineyard Team office.

Sustainable Brands Conference

CCVT recently hosted a reception at the Sustainable Brands 08 Conference organized by Sustainable Life Media. Several of our growers and staff were around to pour wines and share stories about Vineyard Team history. This represents one of the many ways that we're outreaching beyond our regular circles and sharing information about our history, projects, and upcoming certification program in order to gain interest, develop partnerships, and position ourself in the context of marketing a certified sustainable product.

Certification

The auditor is contracted, the growers are completing their paperwork, and staff and committee are working tirelessly on an endless array of logistical, legal, and communications issues to make our certification program a reality. It is an extremely busy time as we address all sorts of issues that we've previously been able to defer. With the draft standards in place and the on-site audits scheduled for July, we're very excited about this new phase for CCVT programs. Special thanks to Jill, our committee, and each of the pilot growers for stepping up and continuing to do amazing work on this program. Many program details are listed on the website if you'd like more information.

Sip the Good Life™

What has become clear in our research and various travels outside of our techie, grower circle, is that CCVT has traditionally been weak in communicating what we do to a non-technical audience. We are very excited to be developing an integrated communications campaign that connects the value of our work to consumers, vendors, and others. We'll employ a variety of e-tools and traditional materials to communicate and engage a variety of interested parties. We're clearly on to something, because in the short time that we've had our interim web page and materials, we've had amazing success in terms of web traffic, click-through rates, and conversions. Check out www.sipthegoodlife.org to get a glimpse of what is to come – and share it with others.

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www.vineyardteam.org

healthy farms • healthy environments • healthy communities

sustainable ag EXPO

NOVEMBER 13 & 14, 2008

monterey county fairgrounds
monterey, california

www.sustainableagexpo.org

- Over 9 hours of continuing education requested for PCA, PA, QAL, CCA and Ag Waiver hours, including laws and regulations.
- Program topics are relevant to a variety of farm and ranch operations.
- New and improved schedule of events.
- Timely and pertinent seminar topics include, but are not limited to
 - Carbon footprints and energy efficiency
 - Air and water quality protection
 - Certification programs
 - Crops specific research results
 - Nutrient management
 - Food safety
 - and more
- Unique trade show featuring a variety of products and services supporting sustainable farming.
- Exhibitors' Showcase, a wine and hors d'oeuvres reception, following the first day of seminars.

The Sustainable Ag Expo sells out every year for both exhibit space and seminar seats. Be sure to mark your calendar and reserve your space!

For more information, visit www.SustainableAgExpo.org
or call the CCVT office at 805.369.2288

Barn Owls and Owl Boxes

By Donna Skemp of Pacific Wildlife Care

Founded in 1986, Pacific Wildlife Care is the only organization in San Luis Obispo County that can legally rescue and rehabilitate native California wildlife. We are a non-profit, volunteer organization supported by our membership, grants and donations. Our purpose is to rescue, rehabilitate and return to the wild native California wildlife when that is possible, or to provide a humane alternative when release is not an option. Pacific Wildlife Care is also committed to educating the public about wildlife and the impact of human activity through our hotline and our education animals. We are licensed by both the California Department of Fish and Game and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Last Spring, after years of rehabilitating out of our homes, we opened a wildlife care center in Morro Bay. This center realizes a long-held dream of a central location for the rehabilitation of wildlife that can insure quality care, professionalism and a place where continuing education will mean a constantly improving ability to provide for injured and orphaned animals.

As a part of these efforts, and because we often see the unintended consequences of the use of rodenticides, we are encouraging the placement of barn owl boxes in appropriate habitats. Barn owls have almost disappeared east of the Mississippi River due to pesticide use, loss of habitat and collisions with cars and fences. Barn owls live in this area year round and eat enormous numbers of mice, rats, and gophers. It is estimated that in raising their large families, they may eat up to 3,000 rodents annually. These beautiful animals normally hunt at dusk and dawn, although during the breeding season, they are often out throughout the night.



A dehydrated owlet that was rescued after it jumped from its overheated owl box.



The same owl after rehabilitation. Pictured with another owl helped by Pacific Wildlife Care.

Pacific Wildlife Care encourages the use of owl boxes to attract Barn owls to vineyards. Owl boxes need to be placed where there will be little or no human interference, as this may cause the hen to abandon her eggs. Two concerns are heat and predators. Heat can be mediated by a sun roof on the box with an air space between it and the actual roof of the box, and by placing the box in the afternoon shade of a large oak tree or barn wall, where owls would naturally nest. Predation by raccoons, skunks, possums and Great Horned Owls can be reduced by putting the box on a 10 foot pole with a 3 foot aluminum baffle part way up the pole. A properly sized entrance hole will protect against Great Horned Owls. The boxes also need a dozen half inch drain holes in the bottom and a means to clean them once a year.

Pacific Wildlife Care is selling boxes that meet most of these requirements, although we will not provide the pole, the baffle or the owl. There are no guarantees that owls will occupy the box, but there has been great success with owl boxes in many areas of California. Barn owls hunt in open fields and usually do not hunt directly around their nest box which is why nest boxes are best placed at the edges of fields. They have a hunting area of up to three miles and territories often overlap meaning it is okay to place several boxes within a territory. It is essential that rodenticides not be used if you are placing owl boxes on your property, as it would be luring animals to their death.

If you are interested in supporting our efforts by purchasing an owl box, you can contact Donna Skemp at (805) 712-4394 or the Pacific Wildlife Care Center at (805) 772-9494.

EARTH DAY FOOD & WINE FESTIVAL

A HUGE SUCCESS!

We want to thank everyone involved in making this year's Earth Day Food & Wine Festival such a success! This year's event helped us raise \$40,000 for sustainable agriculture and farmworker outreach programs conducted by CCVT.

Through our extensive promotions strategy, we achieved 2 million impressions through print, radio, television and online promotions. Notably, the radio interview conducted by the Public News Service was picked up by Clear Channel and 460 national stations, our website received 15,000 unique visitors per month, and our glossy print promotions landed in the hands of 450,000 interested wine consumers throughout the country.

This year, we doubled every aspect of the Earth Day Food & Wine Festival—ticketholders, wineries, chefs, producers, exhibitors, sponsors—truly an amazing feat by a small grower group that typically does farmer outreach.

Clearly, there is community interest and appreciation of sustainable foods, wines, and products; we are very pleased that we could successfully connect like-minded consumers and producers. This is proven by the 800 people who crossed the event gates on April 19.

We look forward to the 2009 Earth Day Food & Wine Festival on Saturday, April 19th!

Here's what people are saying about the Earth Day Food & Wine Festival:

"I've been attending wine and food pairing activities for more than 25 years, and I have to say quite literally yours is the best!"

--Guy Rathbun, KCBX

"What a wonderful day! You guys are great! I can't remember when we, as vendors, were treated so wonderfully. You guys were organized, very communicative, had everybody lined up to greet us, eagerly unload our stuff & deliver it to our spot, check on us regularly, collect the belongings we forgot to unload, you had great signage for parking, registering etc. Never have we been treated so kindly and with so much respect."

--Brigitte Faulkner, Hospitality Catering

"CONGRATULATIONS for a job well done the other day!! The event was a huge success in my book and from someone who works in events, I have to say that it was very well executed. All of my friends said they had an awesome time and were really glad we went. Thanks for letting us volunteer and attend!"

--Breidi Truscott, volunteer

"What a great day at the ranch! Congratulations to you and the whole staff for a well organized and successful event. We enjoyed our sponsorship and hope to be involved again."

--Barrie Cleveland, California Winery Advisor

"Just wanted to thank you for all the hard work you put into this event as well as everyone else with CCVT. You guys did an awesome job and the event was absolutely wonderful!"

--Rebecca Hallett, Candlewealth International, Inc.

"Just want to drop a note to say how wonderful the Earth Day event was. My table placement was fabulous! Right near the band! THANK YOU!!!"

--Barbara-Jo Osborne, attendee



WATER STEWARDSHIP PROJECT:

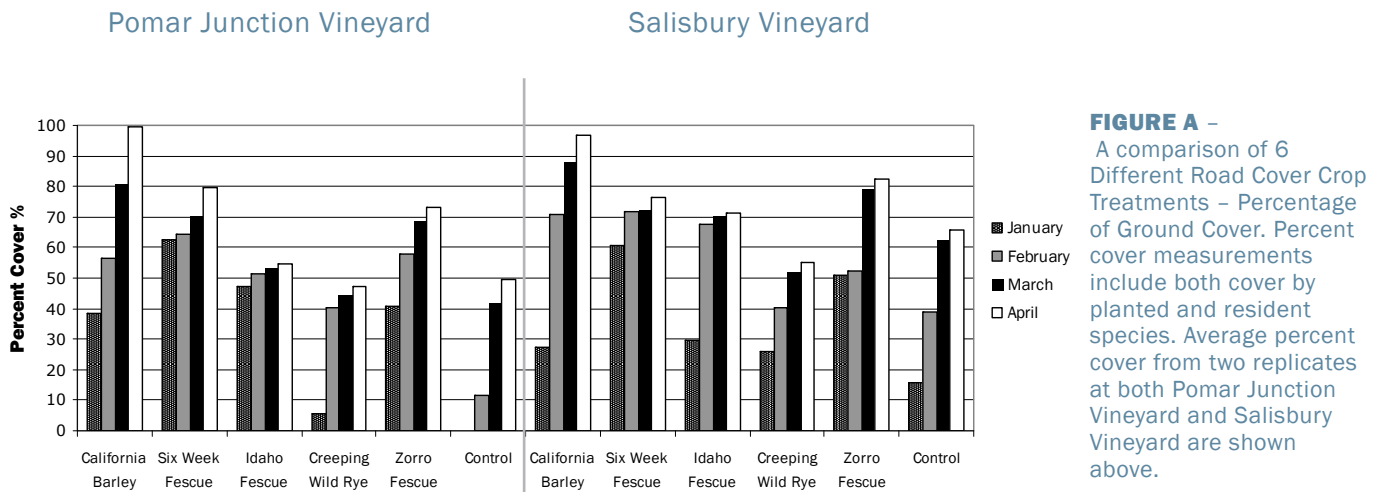
Vegetative Road Management Evaluation Prop 50 Project Year One Results

Gaylene Ewing, CCVT Project Technician

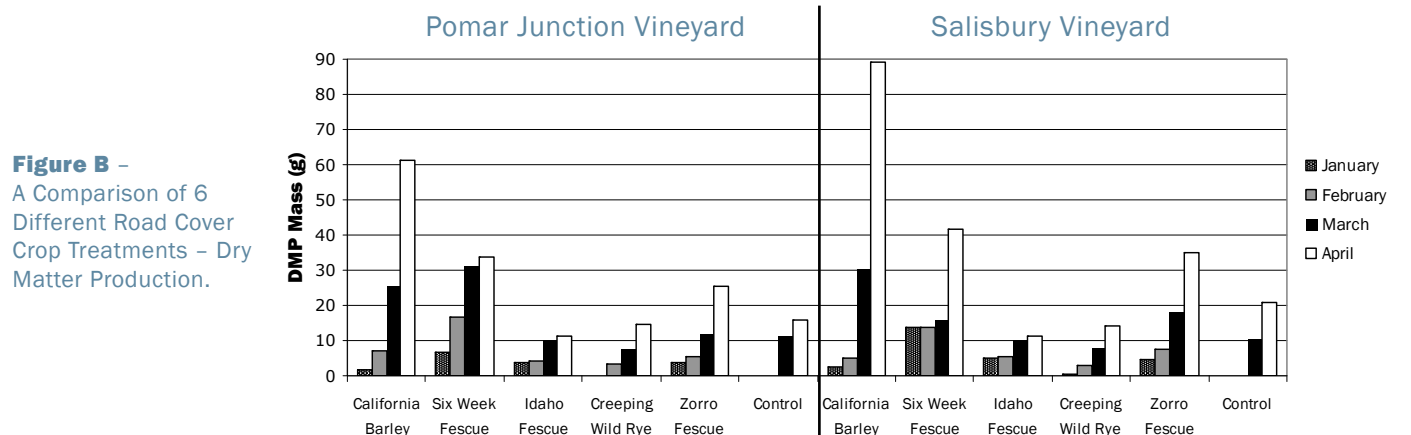
Vineyard roads have the potential to produce significant amounts of erosion if not properly managed during wet winter months. By planting cover crops (non-economic crops often planted between vine rows) which help keep soil in place during heavy rains, CCVT staff hopes to demonstrate to other vineyards through a two-year comprehensive study, the benefits of using cover crops for road management.

The road management study began on November 7th, 2007 when CCVT staff planted six, 12' x 12' road management treatments at Pomar Junction Vineyard, Templeton and Salisbury Vineyard, San Luis Obispo. Each treatment was replicated twice and photo documentation of each treatment occurred on a monthly basis from January to April, 2008. Each month, the plots are evaluated for percent of soil covered by vegetation, water infiltration rates (to keep it from running offsite), and dry matter production. Project results of this two-year study will help growers determine the most effective cover crop to plant on their vineyard roads and will encourage the adoption of road management practices throughout Central Coast vineyards.

Percent cover measurements were documented by taking a digital photograph directly above the road cover treatment in a 4' x 4' quadrant. Using the ImageJ software program, staff calculated percent cover of plant material versus soil. Percent cover data is shown in Figure A for the months of January to April.



Dry matter production was obtained by clipping above-ground growth from a 0.5m² quadrant within each plot. The clippings were placed in a labeled paper bag and oven dried for 48 hours at the Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo's Department of Earth and Soil Sciences. The bags were then weighed (bag weight subtracted) and recorded. Dry matter production data is shown in Figure B for the months of January to April.



Continued from page 5

Infiltration rates were taken using an infiltrometer. This device measures the rate at which water is absorbed by the soil. With greater root establishment, infiltration rates would be higher, increasing water absorbed by the soil and decreasing water running off of the road. Infiltration rates were obtained monthly in each plot over a fifteen minute period. The final reading was then multiplied by four equalling total inches of soil infiltrated per hour.

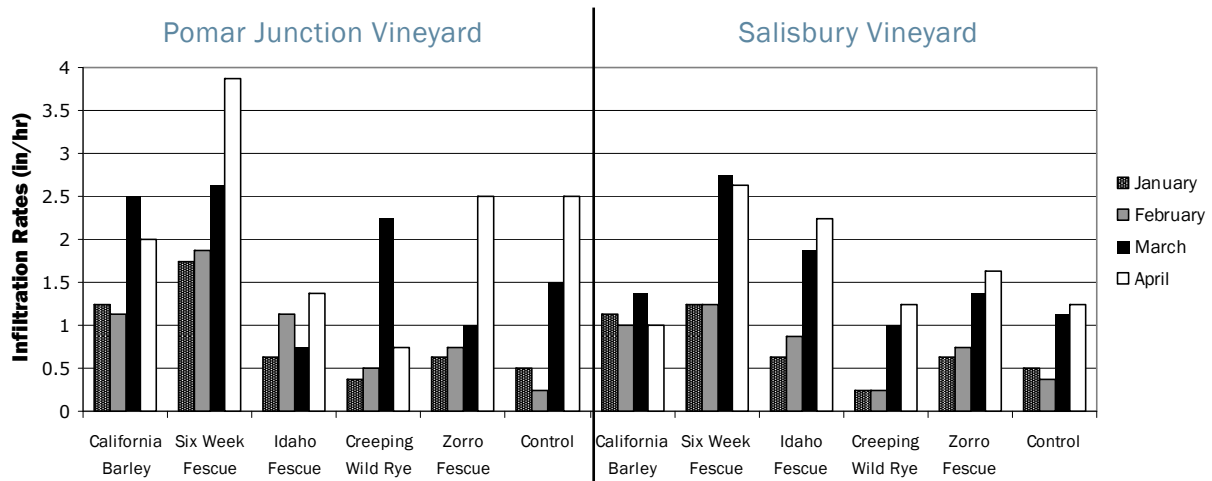


Figure C – A Comparison of 6 Different Road Cover Crop Treatments – Infiltration Rates. Infiltration rates of each treatment was measured using an infiltrometer, giving readings of inches of soil infiltrated per hour. Average infiltration rates from two replicates of each treatment at both Pomar Junction Vineyard and Salisbury Vineyard are shown above.

Challenges, Successes and Discussion

Being at the mercy of Mother Nature, growing the perfect road cover is nearly impossible. With low late-winter temperatures and rain more prevalent in the early months than the later, this year presented its own handful of challenges to establishing the road cover crops. Even though treatment plots were set up with micro-sprinklers to stimulate early germination, the first few storms of the year were very intense and caused some rills to form throughout the study area, especially in San Luis Obispo. As the cover began to grow, areas where rills were present altered the percent cover and above ground biomass readings.

Weeds also found their way into the study area. Staff worked hard to eradicate sprouting weed species to get an accurate percent cover reading and weeds were not incorporated into the dry matter production measurements. Though weeds do provide ground cover and contribute to erosion control, weeds can often out compete a potentially more effective cover.

With every challenge arises a nugget of great information that can be applied in the vineyard. Six week fescue was an outstanding species. It germinated the earliest and grew the quickest in the early months with the highest dry matter production, infiltration rates, and percent cover in January and February when ground cover is needed the most. Because of early germination, six week fescue was a great competitor with weeds. Six week fescue plots had noticeably less weeds than others and the low growing fescue went to seed by late March.

Zorro fescue was also a great contestant with even distribution, plenty of fibrous roots and early development of above-ground biomass. Creeping wild rye was the weakest species with difficult germination and low dry matter production and percent cover. Creeping wild rye was the only perennial species tested and came recommended for being able to grow in low-oxygen, compacted soil, and very manageable once established. Unfortunately, establishment was too difficult to make this species a viable option.

Year two of the vegetative road management study will break ground again in the fall of 2008, testing the species' that did well in year one along with other possible candidates.

new to the team thanks for your membership!

4M Vineyards
Arroyo Loma Vineyard I & II
Associates Insectary
Booker Vineyards
Cinquain Cellars
Clautiere Vineyard
Creston Cripple Creek, LLC
Elder Vineyard

Epoch Estate Wines
Eros Cellars
Four Vines Winery
Golden Oaks Vineyard
Irrigation & Environmental Products
Lock Vineyard/Ecluse Wines
Nygren Hill Vineyard, LLC
Pure Sense, Inc.

San Saba
Solar Technologies
Sure Harvest
Sylvester Vineyards & Winery
Terra Bella Vineyards
William McCollough, Inc.
Zenaida Cellars

CCVT Grower Interview: David Gates, Ridge Vineyard

What is your farming background and what brought you to the winegrape industry?

I grew up on a small farm in Minnesota where we raised beef cattle, alfalfa, corn, and soybeans. I decided to leave the cold winters behind when I started college and moved to California. I eventually ended up at UC Davis where to my delight I discovered that I could actually make a (modest) living growing grapes for wine, which I had taken a liking to.

How long have you been working for Ridge and what are your responsibilities? What is your favorite part about working at Ridge?

I have been with Ridge Vineyards since 1989 (how fast the time flies!). I am responsible for our estate vineyards, which include Monte Bello in the Santa Cruz Mountains and Lytton Springs and Geyserville in Sonoma County. I also look after our growers and their grapes. Ridge is a small company, so I am able to be involved in many aspects of its operation, from growing the grapes, evaluating the wines, and helping to present them to consumers. I still gain the most pleasure from interacting with the vineyards - and of all the tasks throughout the year I would have to say that pruning with the crew is my favorite.

Ridge has recently been involved with CCVT research on erosion control and beneficial habitat plantings in the past year, how has being a project grower benefited you and what have you learned from CCVT projects?

I am very excited about our involvement with CCVT research. We are a bit isolated here in the Santa Cruz Mountains, and being able to get involved with a vibrant organization like CCVT helps to keep us on the cutting edge of practical viticulture.

What do you think are the biggest issues and challenges for the Santa Cruz Mountain wine industry, and what do you think needs to be done to address these problems?

The Santa Cruz Mountains wine industry faces the same wine world as the rest of the California wine industry. World wide competition is fierce and will only increase as new wines come online and everyone around the world continues to put wine into the largest wine market, the US. There are so many labels out there, so many choices that you have to work really hard to differentiate your wines from everyone else's. CCVT has a great team in a great region and that is really making a difference for Central Coast wines. Plus that movie on pinot noir didn't hurt either...

What are the biggest changes in sustainable practices that you have implemented in the last decade? What challenges came with this, and what challenges do you see in the future?

One of the biggest changes in our farming in the last decade revolves around pest insects and how we choose to deal with them. We haven't sprayed for leafhoppers since I started at Ridge, but we have had problems with spider mites, mealybugs, and blue-green sharpshooters. For mites, we intensively scout and release beneficial mites and six-spotted thrips. For mealybugs, we use boron bait to weaken the Argentine ant population then release a beneficial called the "mealybug destroyer." For blue-green sharpshooters, which vector Pierce's disease, we apply Surround in affected areas. This clay acts as a deterrent, preventing the



blue-greens from feeding long enough on the vines to transmit the disease. Potential challenges in the future include glassy-winged sharpshooters, vine mealybugs, and who knows what else...

Does Ridge communicate their sustainable farming practices to their consumers, if so how, and why is this important to you?

We are constantly putting out our "sustainability" ethics to our customers. This happens through our website, our wholesale and retail mailings, and most importantly through our interactions with our consumers at our tasting rooms and through our distributor partners. It is a never-ending process of research, discovery, education, and integration (much like sustainable farming!). This is important because we really are trying to do the best that we can to limit our impact on the planet and all of this effort can help us further differentiate ourselves from other wineries.

What do you do for fun? Do you have any hobbies?

I love to fly fish, I dabble in woodworking and I am working on a Jeep restoration project!

Central Coast Vineyard Team

our mission

The Central Coast Vineyard Team identifies and promotes the most environmentally safe, viticulturally and economically sustainable farming methods, while maintaining or improving the quality and flavor of wine grapes. The Team is a model for wine grape growers and develops the public trust of stewardship for natural resources.

our values

Conservation - Integrity - Sharing - Learning - Innovation

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Special thanks to those serving on our Board of Directors. We have plenty of openings for committee members! Let us know if you'd like to support our programs by serving on a committee!

This publication is made possible by the generous support of our members and through grants from the Regional Water Quality Control Board, USDA, and CDFR. Content does not necessarily reflect the views of our members or funders.

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