

# CCVT



CENTRAL COAST VINEYARD TEAM

SUMMER 2010

## 18TH ANNUAL MONTEREY WINEMAKERS' CELEBRATION

August 7, 2010

1pm - 5pm

Custom House Plaza, Monterey  
www.montereywines.org

CCVT Members receive a special  
discount – please call Julie at MCVGA

## VINEYARD MICROCLIMATE: WHAT IS YOUR RIPENING CURVE?

August 10, 2010

9am - 11am

J. Lohr Vineyards and Wine, Paso Robles  
www.vineyardteam.org

## CALIFORNIA WINE MONTH LEGISLATIVE TOUR

August 27, 2010

Paso Robles

www.vineyardteam.org

## EROSION AWARENESS WORKSHOP

August 31, 2010

9am - 12pm

Wild Horse Winery, Templeton  
www.vineyardteam.org

## SUSTAINABLE AG EXPO

November 15 - 16, 2010

Embassy Suites, Monterey  
www.sustainableagexpo.org

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835 12th Street, Suite 204  
Paso Robles, California 93446

tel. 805-369-2288

fax. 805-369-2292

[www.vineyardteam.org](http://www.vineyardteam.org)

## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Kris O'Connor

### Awards, Ag Orders, and Facebook

It's no surprise that water remains a top focus for various agencies -- ag producers should be paying close attention to the discussions, decisions, and conclusions of various committees and reports.

In terms of the Ag Waiver, the Regional Water Quality Control Board gave specific recommendations following the marathon May workshop: focus on high priority constituents, focus on high priority watersheds with significant exceedences, recognize good faith efforts by the agricultural community, consider the capacity of staff to manage paperwork and data. In my opinion, these were all very positive in terms of providing direction for the new order. At this point, RWQCB staff is preparing a new order which will most likely be presented to Board members in November, which will begin a new public input period. Realistically, a revised Ag Waiver/Order should be in place by next summer.

What does that mean for ag operators? I encourage everyone to continue doing self-assessments and document various practices that demonstrate their "low risk" threat with regards to water quality (ex. pictures of cover crops in the winter, low nitrogen input documentation, integrated pest management). I also encourage everyone to maintain their continuing education documentation; keep a file of the meetings that you attend.

I've had several conversations with folks concerned about the status of SIP in the staff's proposed order. Many of you know that SIP Certified vineyards were identified by RWQCB staff to be "low risk" dischargers and therefore exempt from certain documentation. We were both pleased with this recognition and believe that it is warranted. We were also surprised because we did not actively seek that recognition. Our position has always been that many operators should fall into this low-risk category regardless of whether they are certified or not. We will continue to communicate this point to key decision makers as this process continues.

With the development of master water plans, focus on agricultural water use, watersheds that are areas of concern, growers should also be very mindful of the water quantity issues. Some of you might know that I used to work for the Irrigation Training & Research Center and as such, I was subcontracted by Boyle Engineering for developing the agricultural water demand section of the previous SLO County Master Water Plan. I obviously have more understanding of vineyard water use now and am paying special attention to the assumptions and methods used for various analyses and will be participating at various meetings.

We have been and continue to be very involved in this process in terms of committee work, tracking public comment, and providing input to staff. In addition, we're addressing water education with several key local, statewide, and federal decision makers through a tour on August 27 coordinated with PRWCA and SLOVGA.

The Vineyard Team has a credible voice in these discussions because of our proven track record, project data, and members' work. As always, I welcome your input. Please feel free to contact me at any time with your comments or concerns.

**SUSTAINABLE AG EXPO**

Join the Central Coast Vineyard Team as we explore sustainable agriculture at the 6th Annual Sustainable Ag Expo in Monterey, November 15th and 16th.

Seminars include dynamic speakers on crop-specific and general topics facing vineyards and row-crops. Discussion of real-time issues pertinent to the agricultural community will give attendees relevant and applicable information. Continuing Education credits, including laws and regulations hours, will be available for PCA, PA, CCA and Water Quality.

The Sustainable Ag Expo features a tradeshow representing a diversity of companies whose services support the Three E's of Sustainability.

Exhibitor and Sponsor registration is open and available on a first-come, first-served basis. Space is extremely limited, so early registration is strongly encouraged. Attendee registration opened July 15th, with an early-bird discount available until October 15th.

**Exhibitors and Sponsors:** Kyle Beal Wommack 805.369.2288 ext. 5 or kyle@vineyardteam.org

**Attendees:** Beth Vukmanic 805.369.2288 ext. 2 or beth@vineyardteam.org

**Speakers:** Kate Joyce 805.369.2288 ext. 5 or kate@vineyardteam.org

**SIP CERTIFICATION**

SIP Certification is one of the few programs that allows the seal to be used on the bottle. This distinguishing factor provides a way for vineyards statewide to verify their attention to integrated farming practices through a commitment to environmental stewardship, equitable treatment of employees and economic viability.

CCVT is excited to see the number of wines carrying the SIP seal increase this year as 2008 reds and 2009 whites are bottled. Recently, the number of SIP Certified wines on the market has increased from 45,000 to 66,000 and we expect that number to continue growing. Visit [siphthegoodlife.org](http://siphthegoodlife.org) for the most recent list of available wines.

**NRCS CONSERVATION PLANNING ASSISTANCE AVAILABLE**

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is the Department of Agriculture's principal agency for providing conservation technical assistance to private landowners. Working with local Resource Conservation Districts, the NRCS delivers consistent, science-based, site-specific solutions to help private landowners voluntarily conserve, maintain, and improve their resources.

The assistance provided by NRCS is based on the voluntary and collaborative development of a conservation plan - a thorough assessment of the land that allows the client to identify and evaluate opportunities for using and managing the resources. Conservation plans can help clients achieve their natural resource, economic and quality of life goals. These may include obtaining SIP certification through the CCVT, or meeting state water and air quality mandates.

Technical assistance is available to help clients design, layout, and evaluate structural conservation practices such as stockwater systems, water conserving irrigation systems, and sediment basins; and develop management alternatives and cultural practices needed to establish and maintain vegetation, reduce the use of pesticides and fertilizers, and improve the use and management of irrigation water.

A conservation plan is required prior to becoming eligible for NRCS financial assistance programs such as EQIP - Environmental Quality Incentives Program. All services provided by the NRCS are free and confidential.

For more information or to start the conservation planning process on your land please contact the NRCS at the following offices:

**San Luis Obispo County:** Margy or Tina at (805) 434-0396 x 3

**Santa Barbara County:** Nikki at (805) 928-9269 x 108 or [nikki.smith@ca.usda.gov](mailto:nikki.smith@ca.usda.gov)

**San Benito County:** Athena at (831) 637-4360 x 110

**Santa Cruz and Monterey County:** Robert (831) 424-1036 x 101



EARTH DAY  
**FOOD & WINE FESTIVAL**

The 4th Annual Earth Day Food & Wine Festival was a fabulous success and we appreciate everyone who visited the Central Coast and supported the area's sustainably produced, award-winning food and wine.

*Here's what people are saying:*

"Keep up the good work! It was awesome to see so many different exhibitors, and the fact that it's not just wine makes it even better. The quality of the food provided was excellent - this is one of our favorite events in the area!"

-2010 Attendee

"A remarkable event, with fabulous tasting and learning opportunities. I recommend it without reservation."

-David Hance, 2010 Attendee

"This is my favorite event on the Central Coast!"

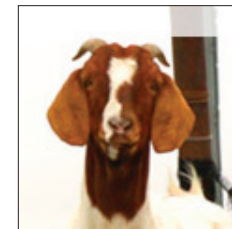
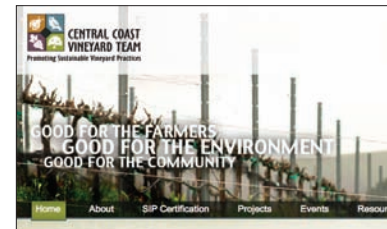
-Chris Steimle, 2010 Attendee

"We were most surprised by the quality of food, which exceeded all expectations."

-Brian Christopher, 2009/2010 Attendee

"Your team is terrific. You thought of every detail! I love the Zero Waste program!"

-Marilyn Farmer, AIA, LEED AP President, California Central Coast Chapter (C4), U.S. Green Building Council



**A FRESH, NEW CCVT WEBSITE!**

The updated Central Coast Vineyard Team website has been launched, and is available at the same address, [www.vineyardteam.org](http://www.vineyardteam.org). With a new Resource Library, CCVT Membership information and descriptions of the history and the mission of CCVT, the new website is full of easy-to-access, relevant information for members and visitors alike. The new look is modern and clean, and promotes ease of navigation.

**NOTABLE UPDATES**

**April 15** The Tribune article "State Regulators Laud Winery Group" announces that CCVT was awarded the Department of Pesticide Regulation's Innovative Pest Management Award, one of only eight given out each year.

**April 22** Wine Spectator Online lists CCVT and Earth Day in its article "Supporting Earth Day in the Wine Industry." Wine Spectator Online reaches an audience of 500,000 unique visitors each month.

**April 29** Kris tours with Christopher Sawyer, Sommelier.

**April** Total Earth Day impressions, including those from ads, articles, blogs and reviews, reach 8.5 million.

**May 7** Kris participates in the SLO Visitors and Conference Bureau Tour.

**May 13** The Tribune's article "Farmers Push Back on New Runoff Rules" quotes Kris regarding the the new Ag Waiver.

**May 20 and 21** Cooking for Solutions brings together an elite and sustainably-focused audience. Beth pours SIP Certified wines at the two-day event.

**May 22** Wine Festival attendees show an unusually high level of interest in SIP wines at Paso Robles Wine Festival Grand Tasting in Paso Robles Downtown Park.

**May 31** The Wine Spectator article "Giving New Meaning to Green," compares certification programs, including CCVT's SIP, reaching a nationwide audience of 366,099.

**April and June 2010** The SIP Seal is featured in two Food and Wine Magazine ads promoting Paso Robles. CCVT partners with PRWCA in this venture. Each ad was a two-page spread and reached 954,615 readers per issue.

**June 7 through 10** CCVT sponsors and Kris attends Sustainable Brands '10 in Monterey.

## CCVT BAIT STATION DEMONSTRATION PROJECTS

By Gaylene Ewing, Project Coordinator

There are a wide variety of chemical solutions for the control of mealybug species in Central Coast vineyards. However, even if there are reduced risk insecticides available for the effective control of these species, biological and cultural control methods may makes these insecticides more effective. A sustainable approach to the management of any pest should not rely strictly on insecticides, even if there are a variety that can be used in rotation. In order to ensure the most reliable control of mealybugs, a diverse range of management strategies should be considered. The initial implementation of some of these strategies may be costly, however in the long term, these costs could balance out as the grower becomes more efficient in their use, and once these practices lessen the reliance on some of the more expensive chemical solutions.

**In order to achieve biological control mealybugs, populations of Argentine Ants must first be controlled.**

The Argentine Ant can be extremely disruptive to the biological control of mealybugs in many coastal vineyards. In return for honeydew secretions from mealybugs, these ants tend and protect mealybugs from their

natural enemies. In order to achieve biological control mealybugs, populations of Argentine Ants must first be controlled. Once these ants are controlled, biological control methods can be much more effective.

Over a three-year period, CCVT project staff and the cooperating growers built 350 PVC ant bait stations and placed them at a density of 8-15 bait stations per acre on seventeen different demonstration vineyards. The liquid bait inside these stations (Gourmet Liquid Ant Bait) contains the active ingredient boric acid which is effective in the control of Argentine Ants. The low concentration of this material ensures that the bait is taken by the worker ants back to the nest and fed to the brood (newly hatched ant larvae). The material has sufficient concentration to kill the newly hatched brood ensuring that the next population will be reduced through the reduction in the reproductive generation. Because only the reproductive stages are targeted, and there is only one reproductive cycle per year, it may take several years before there is a noticeable decrease in the population of ants in the vineyard.

Bait stations were installed in the vineyards in April of 2008, 2009, and 2010, and were then pulled from the vineyards after harvest in October to prolong the life of the PVC. CCVT staff gained valuable grower feedback after harvest regarding their efficacy, management, and whether the demonstration grower would be expanding the practice into other infested blocks or vineyards.

**During the summer of 2009, bait stations experienced anywhere from 1.1 to 3.8 million ant visits on a monthly basis.**

In 2009, CCVT project staff approached the question of efficacy and implemented a monthly weighing program to determine the number of ant visits to each station. According to Reiersen et al., 1998, each gram of bait removed from the station correlates to 3,300 ant visits. Project staff assigned each bait station a unique ID number before they were placed into the vineyard. On a monthly basis, they were weighed and the difference between the monthly data sets was used to determine the number of ant visits during that period. For example, bait station number H09 at Hahn Vineyard weighed 3260 grams in June 2009 and 2977 grams in July 2009. The difference between these weights is 283 grams which (multiplied by 3,300 ant visits per gram) correlates to 935,536 ant visits for the month. During the summer of 2009, bait stations experienced anywhere from 1.1 to 3.8 million ant visits on a monthly basis.

Three bait stations were also placed in areas of no ant activity to determine how much of the monthly weight loss was due to evaporation. During a three month period, staff found that a less than 3% of the total weight was lost due to evaporation.

CCVT also worked with growers on timing and releasing *Cryptolaemus montrouzieri* (Mealybug Destroyer Beetle) within bait station demonstration blocks to add yet another approach to mealybug control. These predators are released at an approximate rate of 5 beetles per infested vine. Both larval and adult stages can predate on mealybug and because of the incorporation of mealybug "wax" onto their bodies, larval stages go undetected by ants. Beetles were donated by Associates Insectary for this demonstration project.

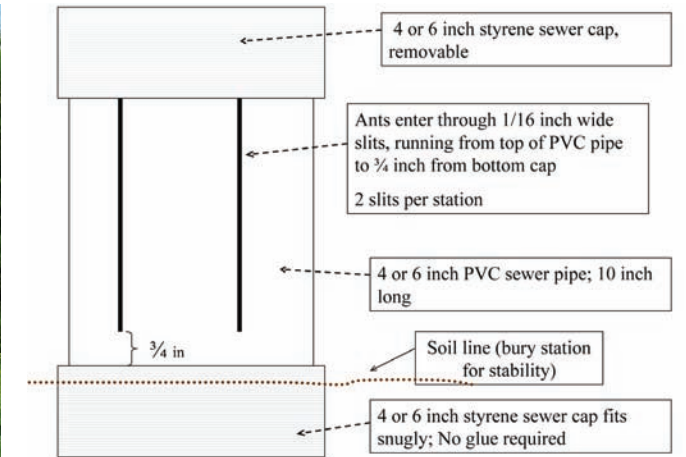
At Kendall Jackson's Mission Trails Vineyard in Los Alamos, CCVT and Suterra have partnered to demonstrate the use of a Vine Mealybug (VMB) mating disruption program to decrease mealybug populations (and chemical sprays) in an infested block of the vineyard. Over a 40-acre area, pheromone cards slowly release the VMB pheromone to create a highly concentrated pheromone 'plume' within the vineyard block. The intense amount of pheromone makes it difficult for the flying male VMB to track a female for mating. On June 29th, 2010 CCVT hosted a tailgate at the Mission Trails Vineyard to discuss and learn about multiple approaches to controlling VMB.

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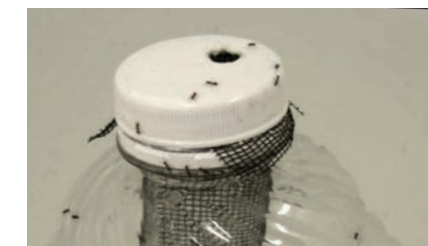
## PVC BAIT STATION DESIGN



Gaylene Ewing, CCVT Project Coordinator discusses bait station construction at the June 29th VMB tailgate.



Bait station shown with ant activity. Gourmet Liquid Ant Bait is diluted at 50% inside a juice bottle.



Ants access bait using Fiberglass window screen "bridge." Fiberglass window screen is sold in rolls at most hardware stores. Make sure rolled screen reaches the bottom of the bait bottle. Place a 3/8" hole in bottle cap.



Bottles sit upright inside bait stations.

- » 3 qt. bottle for 6" dia. pipe.
- » 32 oz. bottle for 4" dia. pipe.



Growers at the June 29th CCVT tailgate at KJ's Mission Trails Vineyard observing bait stations in the field.

## GROWER INTERVIEW



*Hilary Graves*  
Graves Winegrowers



*Simon Graves*

Director of Vineyard Operations, Fosters America

### What brought you into the wine industry?

Hilary: I got into the wine industry in a very round about way. I come from a farming family, but I never thought that I would go into agriculture. I earned a bachelors degree in business at Fresno State, then went off to graduate school in Texas where I earned a Masters degree in Library Science. My first job out of graduate school was as the Librarian at the Viticulture and Enology Research Center at Fresno State. I needed to learn more about the subject to help the students that were using the library so I started taking classes there. I met my husband, Simon, there and when he graduated with his degree in Enology we moved to the Central Coast. I worked as a Librarian at Cal Poly while I studied viticulture in the graduate program in Crop Science. Eventually I ended up teaching viticulture at Cal Poly and then started my own business in 2002.

Simon: I got into the wine industry after studying viticulture and enology first at Sonoma County Junior College and then at Fresno State

### What are the biggest changes in sustainable practices that you have implemented in recent years?

Hilary: I think for both of us the transition to sustainable practices was pretty easy. We have always been minimalists in our farming and winemaking practices, and sustainability becomes more simple to implement if you are used to low inputs anyway.

### What challenges came with this, and what challenges do you see in the future?

Hilary: Our biggest challenge is probably killing squirrels, which we do very sustainably, with a .17 caliber rifle and non-lead ammunition.

Simon: I think our biggest challenge will be exotic pests, such as vine mealybug, EGVM, LBAM, and whatever will come next. Another big one for us is water rights. In our north coast vineyards, urban encroachment is our biggest challenge.

### In terms of sustainability, how does Graves Winegrowers fit into the picture?

Hilary: Graves Winegrowers is actually two business rolled into one. On the one side I do vineyard consulting and I tend to recommend sustainable practices to my clients, but I am not as aggressive with their vineyards as I am with my own. The other piece of Graves Winegrowers is the winemaking part. I make about 700 cases of wine a year from our estate property, The Ohana Vineyard. From a winemaking point of view, I think that my practices are again, very sustainable. I don't really do much to them at all. I do not inoculate my wines (except for the grenache blanc) and I try not to manipulate them too much so that the character of the vineyard can shine through.

### Can you tell me about using falcons in the vineyards?

Simon: We started using falcons in the vineyard to control starlings in 2002. It is a great way to protect your crop without having anybody affected by it. It's silent, effective, and economical.

### How do you see sustainable wines fitting into the marketplace?

Hilary: I'm not convinced that consumers are willing to pay more for sustainable wines, especially right now.

### What is your proudest accomplishment?

Hilary: My proudest accomplishment is keeping my husband and my daughters healthy and happy.

### When you are not in the vineyards, what can we find you doing?

Hilary: I really like to read and cook. I always find myself interested in learning about a very wide variety of new things.

Simon: You will find me chasing surf, riding my mountain bike, and spending time with my family.

[www.graveswinegrowers.com](http://www.graveswinegrowers.com)

[www.fosters.com](http://www.fosters.com)

## ASSOCIATE INTERVIEW

# BILLY BOOKER

Coastal Tractor, Paso Robles



### What is your agricultural background, and what brought you to the Central Coast?

I grew up in the Salinas area where my grandfather was a row crop farmer and dry land hay, so from an early age liked playing in the dirt. I started my agricultural career with Farmers Mercantile in Salinas in 1979 and in 1989 had the opportunity to move to our King City store where I was able to not only work with the row crop growers but also the vineyards. In 1998 I was given the opportunity to come on board with Coastal Tractor and from the beginning the plan was to open a dealership here in Paso Robles. At that point, I knew that there was a lot of things to learn about wine grape growing, so I planted my own 1 acre vineyard of Cabernet.

### How do you see your role in helping winegrape growers attain more sustainable vineyard managements practices?

When I started at Coastal Tractor I was amazed at all the different specialty vineyard products we had from super narrow tractors to under row cultivators. My role in this is to constantly be looking for tools that can save time and labor and then getting the tools in front of the growers.

With some of these tools the grower is also using less chemical their for becoming even more sustainable.

### In the past few years have you seen a change in farming philosophies within the Central Coast winegrowing community?

With out a doubt, we have seen a lot of changes from row spacing getting narrower, more mechanized equipment and growers using less herbicides, so again even being more sustainable as time goes on.

### What upcoming issues do you see the wine grape industry facing?

I am not sure where to start and how far I should go, but I believe international competition needs to be dealt with by our government by taxing or putting tariffs on product coming in to the U.S. so the final product is more evenly priced and giving our local product a more even playing field. Water is and always will be a hot topic weather its quantity or quality we will constantly have to look for ways to minimize our usage. Some thing we have seen in the past and probably will see again and that is a shortage of labor, competition with produce to the north and south as well as the San Joaquin valley.

### What is your proudest accomplishment?

In business I would have to say having repeat customers is a personal accomplishment because every time a customer comes back I feel I have given them a solution to there problem and that builds good relationships personally as well as in business. Personally I am proud of my wife and I for being able to raise 3 great kids and to have all of them in college at the same time. This is not easy but I would not trade this for anything.

### When you are not at Coastal Tractor what can we find you doing?

Between being a father and long time 4-H sheep leader I love to trout fish in small streams locally and up in the Sierras above Bear Valley. I also enjoy having friends and family over when we are making wine (I mean trying to make wine).

[www.coastaltractor.com](http://www.coastaltractor.com)

# CENTRAL COAST VINEYARD TEAM

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.

CONSERVATION • INTEGRITY • SHARING • LEARNING • INNOVATION

## 2010 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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.

**Chris Cocchiaro** NEW MEMBER  
Wild Horse Winery and Vineyards

**Don Ackerman**  
Foster's Wine Estates

**Willy Cunha**  
Sunview Shandon

**Chris Ferrara**  
Clesi Wines

**Bill Hammond**  
Jackson Family Wines

**Justin Perino**  
Scheid Vineyards

**Linda Mikkiff**  
Golden Oaks Vineyard

**Steve Peck**  
J Lohr Vineyards & Wines

**Anji Perry**  
J Lohr Vineyards & Wines

**Dustin Rubbo**  
Valley Farm Management

**Stasi Seay**  
Diageo Chateau & Estate Wines

**Bryan Wallingford**  
Mesa Vineyard Management

**Jon Winstead**  
E & J Gallo

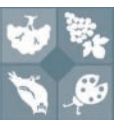
**Mitch Wyss**  
Halter Ranch

## Address Service Requested

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

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CENTRAL COAST VINEYARD TEAM  
835 12th Street, Suite 204  
Paso Robles, CA 93446

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