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www.vineyardteam.org

Background

The Central Coast Vineyard Team is a non-profit organization formed in 1994 by a progressive group of farmers with a mission to educate and guide growers towards environmentally and economically sustainable farming practices. Now with 300 members representing 80,000 acres throughout the region, the Team is recognized as an industry leader in the area of sustainability and has been a model for other organizations. While the group's leadership is based in vineyard and winery representatives, we regularly welcomes input and guidance from regulatory, academic, environmental, and community leaders.

Field Projects

Since 2000, CCVT has conducted a number of research and demonstration projects addressing various farming and environmental issues. Conducted on over 50 sites in four counties the projects test and demonstrate everything from erosion control to integrated pest management. We have many notable successes from our project sites: eliminating organophosphates, reducing erosion by 20 tons/ac/yr, documenting viable alternatives to simazine use, and improving beneficial insect populations through insectary plantings. Not only is this information shared through our robust outreach network, but many project growers expand these practices to additional acreage beyond the research plots.

Outreach & Education

Our extensive outreach network reaches a broad industry audience, locally and nationally, through a variety of methods: vineyard meetings, print publications, electronic communications, trade magazines, and presentations. Our very popular *Tailgate Meetings*, conducted in English and Spanish, typically reach over 1,000 people annually and provide growers with a first hand opportunity to share information about cutting edge practices. Over half of the attendees indicate that they will change or modify a practice as a result of information learned at a meeting. In addition, the website receives 10-15K unique visitors per month, newsletters reach 2,500 people quarterly, and staff regularly presents at local, state, and national meetings in the areas of sustainable agriculture and environmental protection.

Special Events

Aside from the core industry outreach, CCVT has two annual events, both of which are mission based and help diversify our revenues. The *Sustainable Ag Expo* (www.sustainableagexpo.org), held Fall each year, brings together farmers, researchers, and advisors of a variety of crops to address current agricultural, environmental, and economic innovations. Departing from CCVT's other grower programs, the *Earth Day Food & Wine Festival* (www.earthdayfoodandwine.com), connects like-minded consumers, ag producers, and exhibitors in a unique celebration of sustainable food and wines that nurture a healthy environment and lifestyle. Not only does the EDFWF provide a unique opportunity to directly connect sustainable farmers with consumers, but it provides a great example of creating a low impact event. In 2009, the event shuttled 30% of its ticketholders (the remaining people carpooled); it also used solar power for the entertainment stage. As a result of a comprehensive waste management plan that included compostable or recyclable materials and no plastic water bottles, the event only produced two bags of trash for 1,000 people.





Great wines.
Healthy vineyards.

Sustainability in Practice™ (SIP) Certification

Since 1996, CCVT has been helping growers assess their farming practices through their award-winning *Positive Points System* – a protocol that has been modeled by other regions and the State. This provided the foundation of what became the *Sustainability in Practice™ (SIP) Vineyard Certification Program*. 2008 marked the pilot year, with 3,700 acres (14 vineyards) receiving certification. The process requires that growers meet a rigorous standard of operations that is verified through extensive records review and a site audit conducted by an independent inspector. The response to the program has been outstanding – we expect over 15,000 certified in 2010. In addition, there are currently 50,000 cases of wine which have undergone a chain of custody audit and currently carry the SIP seal in the market.

Awards & Recognition

- US Environmental Protection Agency *Pesticide Environmental Stewardship Award* (1 of 5 organizations nationally to receive award)
- Department of Pesticide Regulation *Integrated Pest Management Award*
- Central Coast Magazine *Green Award*
- SLO Air Pollution Control District *Pollution Prevention Award*
- Regional Water Quality Control Board *Water Stewardship Award*
- Several competitive grants from the Department of Pesticide Regulation, California Department of Food & Agriculture, Environmental Protection Agency, Regional Water Quality Control Board, United States Department of Agriculture, & the University of California

Contact Us

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www.vineyardteam.org (Technical Resources)

www.sipthegoodlife.org (Consumer & Trade Resources)

www.sustainableagexpo.org

www.earthdayfoodandwine.com

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