

Winter Practices Tailgate (January 12, 2016)

The latest research changes how we think about trunk diseases.

Dr. Kendra Baumgartner, *USDA-ARS Research Plant Pathologist*, presented the latest research on managing trunk diseases in grapevines.

There are several pathogens which cause trunk disease. They all enter the vine through wounds, either from pruning wounds or trunk damage from equipment. Taking a proactive approach to preventing trunk disease is advised. In one experiment described by Dr. Baumgartner a number different of wine grape varieties were inoculated with *Eutypa lata*. The results suggest that Cabernet sauvignon is especially susceptible.

Recommendations:

- Prune as late in the season as possible, when there will be warm temperatures after pruning. This speeds the healing of the pruning wounds preventing infection. Research shows that late pruning has to be later than February, which is not practical for many growers.
- Double pruning is another strategy with the first pass in December followed by the second pass in March.
- The most effective strategy is a combination of the timing of pruning and the application of fungicides and protectants immediately after. Applying a protectant such as Vitiseal® or B-Lock® in combination with fungicides such as Topsin® or Rally® is the most effective.

Dan Rodrigues, *owner of VinaQuest LLC*, described how to pick locations for soil samples and how to interpret the results of soil analysis.

Key points:

- Changes in soil chemistry and structure are extremely slow.
- Amending soil to adjust soil chemistry and structure is expensive and not very effective.
- Soil analysis will alert you to toxic or near toxic concentrations of minerals in your soil.
- Fertilizer decisions and general vine management are improved when taking soil chemistry into account.
- Changes in soil chemistry over time are also an indicator of how effective your practices are at improving and maintaining the quality of our soil.

Craig Macmillan, *Technical Program Manager for Vineyard Team*, discussed how to achieve a balance between crop load and canopy during pruning.

A short article by San Joaquin County Farm Advisor Paul Verdegaal can be found [here](#) including the method and calculations for quantifying vine balance.

Jeff Smorada, *Ranch Manager for J. Lohr Vineyards and Wines in Paso Robles*, gave a tour of the compost yard at their PR14 ranch. He is able to compost the stems and pomace from the winery to the point where even the seeds have broken down. This is accomplished without the use of animal manure preventing the introduction of human pathogens to the product and reduces or eliminates the need for off-farm inputs.

The slide shows from the talks can be found here:

- [Managing Trunk Diseases of Grapevines](#) (Kendra Baumgartner)
- [Pruning and Vine Balance- Verdegaal](#) (Paul Verdegaal)
- [Pruning for Vine Balance](#) (Craig Macmillan)
- [Soil Analysis- Use and Interpretation](#) (Dan Rodrigues)