VINEHEALTH AUSTRALIA: OUR WINS FOR YOU

Vinehealth Australia is the South Australian grape and wine industries' partner in plant biosecurity.

We focus on delivering practical biosecurity benefits to vineyard owners, winemakers and all members of the grape and wine supply chain while assisting with all facets of biosecurity.

Our aim is to keep South Australian vineyards healthy and profitable into the long term.

This is a snapshot of some of our recent work which has resulted in practical wins for the South Australian grape and wine industries.

Getting you ready

- We took 35 members of the wine industry to the Yarra Valley in November 2019 to see and hear firsthand about the impacts of phylloxera on that region. We learnt about the rate of spread of the pest and the low levels of replanting on phylloxera tolerant rootstocks and the impacts this is forecast to have on wine supply for the region in the medium term. This tour reinforced the importance of access for growers to high health planting material and has led to the development of a rootstock supply and demand project.

> ***"With Vinehealth Australia, we have one body dedicated to the almost impossible task of protecting us from ourselves. It's well coordinated and all the hard legislative work is in place. Vinehealth Australia is the invisible front line that everyone will be screaming for when adversity strikes."***
>
> **Peter Bird, Vineyard Owner, Wrattonbully**

- We have educated hundreds of cellar door and visitor centre staff across multiple wine regions through our Responsible Visitation Program on how to talk to visitors about biosecurity, how to effectively restrict access to vines and what visitor programs to offer that don't compromise the health of vineyards.

- We have made footwear disinfestation easy for vineyard owners, producing fit-for-purpose kits containing all the required materials and instructions for use.

- We have organised and participated in two large phylloxera outbreak simulations to help plan for an outbreak. We are using learnings from these simulations to strengthen SA's Phylloxera Outbreak Plan.

- We conducted a biosecurity risk assessment for a winery to identify priority risk areas for improvement as part of the business' biosecurity plan. This work has led to a number of activities which will ultimately benefit all members of the SA wine industry.

- We continue our involvement in the long-standing Coonawarra Rootstock Trial run in partnership with Treasury Wine Estates and Coonawarra Vignerons Association. Vintage 2019 marked the first year of small lot winemaking for the trial and enabled evaluation of wine and viticulture parameters as we work to better understand rootstocks and their importance as a management and recovery tool to reduce biosecurity risk.

Protecting your livelihood

- We have translated science into practice for the benefit of industry by increasing the required duration of dry heat treatment for sterilising machinery and equipment conducted at 40˚C from 2 to 3 hours. This change better ensures the effectiveness of this treatment against known key endemic phylloxera strains. We worked with authorities in other states to ensure this change was adopted nationally.

> ***"Vinehealth Australia is a critical success factor in the protection of South Australian vineyards from the ravages of phylloxera."***
>
> **Bernard Hickin, Vineyard Owner, Barossa Valley**

- Based on science, we successfully recommended the removal of steam as a valid sterilisation method for machinery and equipment being imported into SA. This decision was based on the likelihood that steam sterilisation is not carried out effectively in practice.
- We also successfully recommended that the entry into SA of vineyard posts, vine guards, dripper tube and wire previously used in grape production be prohibited. In practice, these items cannot be effectively cleaned of soil and vine material so are a risk for spreading unwanted pests and diseases into vineyards.
- We provide regular and timely quarantine advice across the supply chain on how to comply with import requirements for items that can pick up and spread phylloxera and other significant pests and diseases, such as machinery, equipment, grapes, juice and grapevines.
- We regularly present on biosecurity at a range of industry and government forums to increase biosecurity awareness and action and to support regional initiatives.
- We created a series of educational signs for cellar doors to inform visitors about the importance of not walking into vineyards to keep SA phylloxera free. These signs are being ordered and installed nationally.
- We created vineyard-specific farm-gate biosecurity signs which are being ordered and installed nationally.
- We maintain maps used nationally by industry and governments to identify the current location of the different phylloxera management zones in Australia.

Responding to threats

- Alongside PIRSA-Biosecurity SA, our team promptly responds to biosecurity incidents and outbreaks to minimise impacts on vine health and grape and wine production. Biosecurity incidents can be reported to PIRSA-Biosecurity SA on (08) 8207 7820, the Exotic Plant Pest Hotline 1800 084 881, or to Vinehealth either by phone (08) 8273 0550 or our online Biosecurity Incident Response form: **https://vinehealth.com.au/pests/make-a-report/incident-reporting/**

> ***"Following the discovery of unusual leaf symptoms in a young vineyard, we called Vinehealth. The quick response and fantastic service was invaluable and helped us solve the problem."***
>
> **Sue Trott, Vineyard Owner, McLaren Vale**

- We continue to work with PIRSA – Biosecurity SA during fruit fly outbreaks that affect viticultural regions, to develop clear movement conditions that grape and wine supply chain businesses must comply with and we communicate these conditions with affected businesses.
- We publish a monthly e-newsletter and Biosecurity Alerts as needed to keep you up to date with key biosecurity information and threats.
- We continue to maintain and operate a dry heat treatment facility in Naracoorte to enable you to sterilise your machinery and equipment when moving between regions inside SA.
- Using our Vineyard Register, we assisted PIRSA during the recent Cudlee Creek and Kangaroo Island bushfires to inform government response activities. The Vineyard Register is a powerful database of every vineyard planted of 0.5 hectares or more in size in South Australia.
- We continue to act as a vital conduit between the Department for Environment and Water and growers during prescribed burns occurring in the Adelaide Hills and Mount Lofty Ranges Region. We use our Vineyard Register to contact growers to advise of an imminent prescribed burn, determine harvest status and work with regional wine associations and authorities to ensure the timing of these burns minimises the risk of smoke taint to unharvested grapes.
- We commissioned and managed the completion of a comprehensive review of *Grapevine Pinot gris virus* (GPGV) to improve Australia's knowledge base of this newly described virus and to enact an appropriate response. We extended the outcomes to the nursery and vine improvement sector nationally prior to the 2019 propagation season, to enhance production of high health planting material for industry.

The future

This year we're working on a range of important projects including:

- Finalising the new SA Phylloxera Outbreak Plan in conjunction with PIRSA – Biosecurity SA;
- Commissioning a project to address the shortage of high health, fit-for-purpose rootstocks for South Australian vineyard owners to combat a biosecurity shock;
- Developing and delivering a contractor biosecurity awareness program;
- Continuing to work with growers, winemakers and contractors to develop practical biosecurity tools and guidelines;
- Developing fit-for-purpose shoe covers for vineyard use;
- Leading the development of a National Management Strategy for Phylloxera with all states and territories;
- Continuing to work with PIRSA on the development of a new Biosecurity Act for the State to ensure ongoing and strengthened protection for the state's vineyards; and
- Continuing to work with other state jurisdictions and state and national wine industry bodies to ensure a focused and strategic investment in biosecurity activities for the benefit of the broader wine industry.

What you don't see

- We maintain the Vineyard Register, a powerful and historic database of every vineyard of 0.5 hectares or more in South Australia.
- We provide aggregated and deidentified data annually from this Register for the South Australian Winegrape Crush Survey.
- We maintain a State pest risk analysis for phylloxera.
- We provide expert biosecurity advice to many industry and government bodies and forums.

Want to know more?

Contact Vinehealth Australia CEO Inca Lee on 0418 818 543, email **inca@vinehealth.com.au** or visit our website at **www.vinehealth.com.au**