

# Investigating New Wine Grape Varieties for Michigan

FINAL REPORT

January 28, 2016

## MICHIGAN WINE FOUNDATION

### Project Team

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Input on the project was provided by the Michigan Grape and Wine Industry Council Research and Education Committee, the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, and Michigan State University.

### Objective of the Project:

Look for and find, if such varieties exist, new, cold-hardy varieties that have 100% Vinifera flavor profiles. Disease resistance is a plus. If found, investigate the importation through the USDA approved Foundation Plan Services of new wine grape varieties from German plant breeding programs that are not currently commercially available in the U.S.

### Activities:

#### Activity 1. Travel to Germany

Research has been conducted in Germany on many cultivars that are commercially available in Europe but not the U.S. A small group of industry, MSU and MDARD representatives visited grapevine nurseries, observed vine growth characteristics and tasted wines from the varieties. The group identified 20 varieties that are not currently commercially available in North America that may have potential for use in the Michigan wine industry. Samples were shipped back to Michigan.

#### Tour Participants:

Mark Johnson – Chateau Chantal (travel expenses funded by this grant). Mr. Johnson researched and organized the trip and served as the translator for the project.

Other participants paid their own costs of the trip.

Lee Lutes – Black Star Farms

Larry Mawby – MAWBY

Jen Braymer – Agrivine

Kerm Campbell – Black Star Farms

Matt Moersch – Round Barn Winery  
Gordon Wenk – MDARD  
Dr. Paolo Sabbatini – MSU

Itinerary (see Appendix A)



**Activity 2. Tasting of German wines by Michigan industry and MSU representatives**

Samples of wine were brought back to Michigan and two sensory evaluation sessions with members of the Michigan wine industry were held (November 23 in East Lansing and December 8 in Grand Rapids). A limited tasting will be held February 24 in Kalamazoo, Michigan.



### **Activity 3. Discussions with Ontario Nursery**

Mark Johnson visited a grapevine nursery in Ontario to investigate the costs and timelines for importation of vines through the Canadian quarantine system. Canada is being considered because the cost of quarantine is approx. \$1,200 compared to \$3,500/variety in the US.

### **Activity 4. Summary Call**

A summary conference call was held January 22, 2016 with interested members of the industry to discuss the outcomes of the project to date and develop recommendations for future work of this project.

#### **Grant Expenditures:**

|                                    |                  |
|------------------------------------|------------------|
| Travel Expenses – Mark J - Germany | \$1977.68        |
| Travel Expenses – Mark J- Ontario  | \$600.00         |
| Wine Samples - Germany             | \$381.21         |
| Shipping                           | \$390.88         |
| Tastings – glass rental            | \$200.00         |
| Tastings – room rental             | \$200.00         |
| Wine Samples – Reference           | \$100.00         |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                       | <b>\$3849.77</b> |
| Interim payment                    | \$2250.00        |
| Final payment                      | \$1599.77        |

#### **Outcomes:**

Of the 24 wines brought back to MI for tasting, 17 were very well accepted. See Appendix B for a scoring summary.

During the summary conference call on January 22, Council Chair Gordon Wenk and Executive Director Karel Bush agreed to a request by the industry members on the call, that the Council could play an immediate role in the future of this project by maintaining a database of individuals actively in the process of importation of new varieties, to avoid costly duplication of effort. Submission of information to this database would be on a voluntary basis. Additional work on this project by the Council will be considered by the Research and Education Advisory Committee (REAC) in Spring 2016.

**Possible Future Activities (which would require private or public funding or a combination):**

1. Procure more samples of the wines and try to pair the number down to a more workable 3 to 5 varieties. Mark Johnson is planning another trip to Germany for this purpose early in 2016, privately funded.
2. Further review of research work already done in Europe. Much of the research findings will be available in the German language only. This review would help to identify additional research needs.

Mark Johnson indicates “there is much research being done in other parts of the world with respect to all areas of viti- and viniculture. It might be wise for the Council to spend a portion of their research budget on searching out such research and having it translated. We don’t know what we don’t know!”

3. Field testing to be done in Michigan or nearby wine region. There is a desire to test the findings of European researchers in our viticultural areas of Michigan. Encouraging MSU or other academic institutions in our region (Brock, Cornell etc.) to plant these varieties in several research plots around the State/ Region and evaluate their performance under their/Michigan conditions would be beneficial.
4. Determine the costs associated with bring in, through quarantine, these new varieties and propagating them to saleable numbers.
5. Finding industry members willing to proceed with the work of importing and propagating these new varieties.

**Outcomes Related to this Project:**

Mark Johnson has been asked by investors to form a company which is in the process of working with a nursery in Canada to import several of these new varieties. They will be signing contracts with the breeders in Germany for the rights to these varieties for North America. He is currently researching what the royalties will be and any upfront costs from the breeders. It is planned to bring the vines into Canada for quarantine in February 2016. The plan is to have grafted vines available for MSU/research as well as a limited number for sale to interested growers by no later than 2022. With any luck this could happen as early as 2020 but that will depend on the quarantine in Canada.

From what Mark understands at this time, the cost of the vines to growers will be approximately what growers are accustomed to paying now, \$3.50/vine plus between \$0.70 and \$0.90 in royalties. This makes them comparable to the new varieties from New York and Minnesota.

## APPENDIX A

### Itinerary

9.7.15 Mon

TVC Lv. 9.7.15 at 5:49 p.m.

SBN Lv. 9.7.15 at 6:00

You guys in Lansing are on your own!

DTW Lv. 9.7.15 at 7:57 p.m. This means only about one hour in DTW between flights and, since they start boarding intl. flights one hour before flight time, don't dawdle.

9.8.15 Tues.

Arr. FRA at 10:25 a.m.

Pick up rental cars and drive approx. 1 ½ hours to the Federal Breeding Station, Geilweilerhof in Siebeldingen near Landau.

Lunch in Siebeldingen.

Meet with Dr. Rudolf Eibach at the station for a tour of the facilities and vineyards and a tasting.

Overnight in Siebeldingen at Villa-Königsgarten Hotel

9.9.15 Wed.

Breakfast at the Hotel and checkout

10:00 meeting with Volker Freytag at his nursery and winery in Neustadt an der Weinstraße.

Noon lunch with Hr. Freytag in a typical restaurant for the region.

Afternoon: I'm still waiting for a suggestion from either Dr. Eibach or Mr. Freytag.

Late afternoon leave for Freiburg in the Baden region. About a 2 hour drive.

Evening: Check into the Green Hotel in Freiburg.

Dinner somewhere near the Hotel.

9.10.15 Thurs.

9:00 – 10:30 Meet Hr. Ernst Weinmann at the Institute in Freiburg. Tour the greenhouses and nursery.

10:30 – 12:00 Tour research facility and experimental cellar. Taste wines.

12:00 Lunch at the Schlosscafe.

Afternoon. Visit the test vineyards of the Institute and a State owned winery.

Dinner on our own.

9.11.15 Fri.

9:00 Visit various vineyards of new varieties (PiWi's) with grower Klaus Benz.

Visit winery Zähringer with Frau Aurelia Warther. Talk about special winemaking techniques for PiWi's.

Tasting of several PiWi wines incl. a selection from the "Best of Freiburg PiWi tasting".

12:30 Lunch at Gasthof Baselblick in Efringen-Kirchen

14:00 Meeting and info exchange with Markus Bürgin of Winery Sonnenschein (sunshine) in Fischingen.

Growing, winemaking and marketing of PiWi's.

This grower uses "minimal pruning technique". He will show that and discuss advantages and disadvantages.

16:00 Meeting and info exchange with Günter Kaufmann at his winery in Efringen-Kirchen.

Discuss growing, winemaking and marketing of PiWi's (What? No tasting? We'll see about that.)

Evening. Dinner to be arranged.

Staying at the same hotel.

9.12.15 Sat.

9:00 Lv. Freiburg. 3 hour drive to Geisenheim.

1:00 Arrive at Breeding station at Geisenheim Univ.

Meet with Frank Manty. Tour station, vineyards, experimental cellar and tasting.

Later afternoon: Check in to Kloster Hotel, Johannisberg (you know, "Johannisberger Riesling").

If time permits, a little sightseeing around the Rheingau.

Dinner with Hannes Schultz, President of Geisenheim Univ.

9.13.15 Sun.

9:00 Lv. Johannisberg . Cross Rhine to Rheinhessen. One hour drive to Winery Wohlgemuth-Schnuerr in Gundersheim.

10:00 Meet Andreas Schnuerr and tour his vineyards of PiWi varieties with tasting afterwards.

12:00 Lv. Gundersheim for one hour drive to Heppenheim on the Hessischebergstraße.

1:00 Meet Reinhard Antes at his nursery and winery.

Tour his nursery with >6 acres and 31 different PiWi varieties.

Tasting.

4:00 check in to Hotel Bacchus in Bensheim about 3 miles from Heppenheim.

4:01 off to the last day of the regional wine fest 300 meters from the hotel.

9.14.15 Mon.

8:30 Lv. Bensheim for 35 min. drive to Frankfurt airport.

11:30 Lv. Frankfurt for DTW

2:57 Arr. DTW

5:42 Lv. DTW for SBN

9:42 Lv. DTW for TVC (ridiculous but there is no better connection) Maybe consider renting a car with 5 of us.

# APPENDIX B

| German Wine Tasting   |                       |      |                         |                           |                      |  |                      |                         |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|------|-------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------|--|----------------------|-------------------------|
| Producer              | Wine Name/Varietal    | Year | Region/Appellation      | Ripeness Category         | Village/Vineyard     | Quality Classification   | Plant this Variety   | Variety Potential in MI |
| <b>Red</b>            |                       |      |                         |                           |                      |  | <b>Average Score</b> | <b>Average Score</b>    |
| Wohlgemuth-Schnürr    | Pinotin               | 2014 | Rheinhessen             | Dry                       |                      | Trocken - Dry, Qualitätswein - obeys appliation laws (experimental cultivation, barrel aged) | 3                    | 3                       |
| Rummel                | Pinotin               | 2014 | Pfälzer Landwein        | Dry                       |                      | Spätlese - Late Harvest  | 2                    | 3                       |
| Geilweilerhof         | Reberger              | 2012 | Pfalz                   | Dry                       | Sieboldinger         | Trocke - Dry, Qualitätswein - obeys appliation laws  | 3                    | 3                       |
| Geilweilerhof         | Calandro              | 2012 | Pfalz                   | Dry                       | Sieboldinger         | Trocken - Dry, im Holzfass gereifit - barrel aged, qualitätswein - obeys appliation laws     | 4                    | 4                       |
| Wohlgemuth-Schnürr    | Extract / Cabertin    | 2012 | Rheinhessen             |                           |                      | Qualitätswein - obeys appliation laws (barrel aged)  | 3                    | 3                       |
| WBI Freiburg          | Monarch               | 2011 | Baden                   |                           |                      | Research Wine  | 3                    | 3                       |
| Andres Dilger         | Monarch               | 2013 | Baden                   |                           |                      | Research Wine  | 2                    | 2                       |
| <b>White</b>          |                       |      |                         |                           |                      |  |                      |                         |
| Zähringer             | Johanniter            | 2014 | Baden - Markgräflerland | Dry                       | Heitersheim          | Trocken - dry, biowein - organic wine  | 4                    | 4                       |
| Zähringer             | Johanniter            | 2013 | Baden - Markgräflerland | Dry                       | Heitersheim          | Trocken - dry, biowein - organic wine  | 4                    | 4                       |
| Hofgut Sonnenscheir   | Johanniter            | 2013 | Baden - Markgräflerland | Dry Fruity                |                      | Kabinett Trocken - Dry Fruity, Bio Prädikatswein - organic wine                              | 3                    | 4                       |
| Weingut Feuerstein    | Johanniter            | 2014 | Baden - Maltesergarten  | Dry Fruity                | Heitersheim          | Kabinett Trocken - Dry Fruity  | 4                    | 4                       |
| Wohlgemuth-Schnürr    | Johanniter            | 2014 | Rheinhessen             | Dry                       | Gundersheim          | Trocken - Dry  | 3                    | 3                       |
| Insel Reichenau       | Muscaris              | 2014 | Baden - Bodensee        | Dry                       | Reichenauer Hochwart | Trocken - Dry (experimental cultivation)   | 3                    | 3                       |
| Wohlgemuth-Schnürr    | Vinolentus / Muscaris | 2014 | Rheinhessen             | Dry Late Harvest (fruity) |                      | Spätlese - Late Harvest, Trocken   | 3                    | 4                       |
| Wohlgemuth-Schnürr    | Late Harvest Muscaris | 2014 | Rheinhessen             | Late Harvest, Sweet       |                      | Qualitätswein - obeys appliation laws, Spätlese - Late Harvest/Fruity, Leiblich - Sweet      | 3                    | 3                       |
| Weingut-Köpfer        | Merzling              | 2014 | Baden                   |                           | Grunerner Altenberg  | Qualitätsweing - obeys appliation laws   | 3                    | 3                       |
| Weingut-Köpfer        | Bronner               | 2014 | Baden                   | Dry                       | Grunerner Altenberg  | Trocken - Dry, Qualitätswein - obeys appliation laws   | 3                    | 3                       |
| Hofgut Sonnenscheir   | Solaris               | 2009 | Baden - Markgräflerland | Off Dry                   |                      | Prädikatswein - Wine with special attributes   | 2                    | 2                       |
| Rummel                | 1er / Cabernet Blanc  | 2014 | Pfälzer Landwein        | Dry                       |                      | Trocken - Dry  | 3                    | 3                       |
| Kaufmann              | Cabernet Blanc        | 2014 | Baden                   | Dry Kabinett (fruity)     |                      | Kabinett Trocken: Dry Fruity, Biowein: Organic Wine  | 3                    | 3                       |
| Hochschule Geisenheim | Saphira               | 2014 |                         |                           |                      |  | 2                    | 3                       |
| Hochschule Geisenheim | Gm 8107-3             | 2015 |                         |                           |                      |  | 3                    | 3                       |
| Geilweilerhof         | Felicia               | 2014 | Pflaz                   | Off - Dry                 | Sieboldinger         | Halbtrocken - off-dry  | 3                    | 3                       |
| Geilweilerhof         | Villaris              | 2014 | Pflaz                   | Dry                       | Sieboldinger         | Trocken - Dry, Qualitätswein - obeys appliation laws   | 2                    | 2                       |
| Geilweilerhof         | Gf. 1993-22-6         | 2014 |                         | Dry                       |                      | Trocken - Dry, Ausation Versuchsanbau - from experimental cultivation                        | 4                    | 4                       |
| Rummel                | California / Cal 6-04 | 2014 | Pfälzer Landwein        | Dry                       |                      | Trocken - Dry  | 3                    | 3                       |
| Feuerstein            | Helios                | 2014 | Baden - Maltesergarten  | Dry Fruity                | Heitersheim          | Kabinett Trocken - Dry Fruity  | 4                    | 4                       |
| Hofgut Sonnenscheir   | Souvignier Gris       | 2013 | Baden - Markgräflerland | Dry Fruity                |                      | Kabinett Trocken - Dry Fruity, Bio Prädikatswein - organic wine                              | 3                    | 3                       |