

MICHIGAN GRAPE AND WINE INDUSTRY COUNCIL
MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
ANNUAL REPORT
FISCAL 2008 OCTOBER 2007 – SEPTEMBER 2008

The Michigan Grape and Wine Industry Council continues to provide an important forum for statewide collaboration in research, promotion and professional development to meet the changing needs of this exciting growth industry. The Council has established a goal to increase the size of the industry to 10,000 wine grape acres by the year 2024 (current acreage is approximately 1900 acres).

INDUSTRY HIGHLIGHTS

- Nine new wineries were recognized by the Council as new “producers of Michigan wine”, bringing the state total to 58, up from 17 in 1995.
- Wine sales in Michigan by Michigan wineries increased 14% in 2007 over 2006.
- Lake Michigan Shore wine trail participated in a Travel Michigan promotional partnership with Harbor Country CVB to promote winery touring to consumers in South Bend, Indiana.
- Michigan Rieslings received considerable media recognition, some instances related to the Riesling Rendezvous in WA state, attended by 3 Michigan winemakers.
- Legislation to create a “small distillers license” in Michigan was passed in July, creating new opportunities for production of distilled spirits from a wide range of Michigan agricultural commodities. Wineries that have been previously producing distilled spirits from fruit, will be at the forefront of these new ventures.
- Michigan State University conducted a 2 day Vineyard Establishment Workshop, with 65 attendees in two locations connected via videoconference.

COUNCIL HIGHLIGHTS

- The Michigan Wine and Spirits Competition received 346 entries –(from 34 wineries). Increased media coverage of the competition helped raise public awareness of the competition and the Michigan wine industry in general.
- HOUR Custom Publishing was retained through the Department of Management and Budget to produce and sell advertising for Michigan Wine Country magazine. 200,000 copies of this popular publication were printed in March 2008 and will be fully distributed by March 2009. Orders for copies of the publication to date are tracking well ahead of 2007.
- Winery touring was included in several out-of-state ads by Travel Michigan, thanks to the close working relationship with this state agency. Articles on winery touring frequently appeared in Travel Michigan’s consumer e-newsletter.
- The Council completed a Strategic Planning exercise to set direction for the future.
- Prominent consumer and trade events during the year included Detroit Uncorked; Best of Detroit, the Ann Arbor Wine Festival and the Wine and Food Festival at Meadowbrook
- LKF Marketing of Kalamazoo completed a redesign of the Council’s website with improved navigation, search function and content management capabilities. The new site was launched to the public in March 2008.
- April Wine Month continued to grow in consumer and trade education impact. More than twenty events were held around the state to tie in with Wine Month, including a Northern Michigan wine industry workshop, combining presentations by trade representatives with a tasting open to members of the local restaurant and retail trade. New Point of Sale materials were utilized by the trade in promotions.
- Michigan State University created a new position of Small Fruit Education Specialist, held by Paul Jenkins, Michigan State University Master’s graduate in Entomology. The position holds a 50% enology extension allocation of time, and Mr. Jenkins is working closely with the Council and the industry to plan educational programming for FY 2009. The Council is contributing to the ongoing salary costs for this position.
- Discussions are ongoing with Michigan State University, Northwestern Michigan Community College and Lake Michigan Community College to develop some form of curriculum to help train workers for employment in the Michigan wine industry.