

WINE GRAPE INFORMATION FOR PENNSYLVANIA AND THE REGION

From Penn State Cooperative Extension

Note: I got a few inquiries from my last e-newsletter about using Pristine and captan together in a tank mix. The two fungicides are tank compatible and in some cases will complement each other well. Pristine is a broad spectrum fungicide that will help cover both bunch rot and ripe rot. In most cases it can be sprayed alone with good results. Captan can be used to supplement Pristine. That said...

Rains are here and Ernesto is on his way to Pennsylvania. I am always amazed at the variability of rainfall accumulation in the region. Growers in parts of south central PA and into MD and VA tell me they are dry. Vineyards in SE PA got from 2-9" in the past week. If rain shadow effects exist, that should be another important criteria for site selection. I have already had a few reports of botrytis and ripe rot getting started even in fruit that is quite far from 20 brix. Late season applications of Pristine may help because of its rainfast properties. If the Pristine has enough time to dry it will stand heavy rains. Follow this with a second application in 10-14 days but watch your pre-harvest intervals. Captan is nearly as effective but washes off with rain. However, it has the benefit of redistributing with rain and has good spreading ability on the berry surface. There is no certainty that this will help but even if infections occurred earlier in the season these late sprays may help to contain the spread of ripe rot.

Two fact sheets on ripe rot:

www.umass.edu/fruitadvisor/factsheets/RipeRotFactSheet.pdf

<http://www.smallfruits.org/SmallFruitsRegGuide/Guides/BunchGrapeSprayGuide.pdf>

My own experience is that spreader-stickers were very helpful with wettable sulfur under rainy conditions. It doesn't mean that you can "go the distance" on spray intervals and quantities of rain are an important consideration, but you may want to consider using a sticker material with captan. I think we are finding out now why those pre-closure sprays at bloom and bunch close are so important. It is tough to play catch-up-ball with these diseases. I considered late botrytis sprays to be more effective as "feel good" sprays than actually doing anything about the disease. Dry weather is the best remedy and unfortunately we cannot spray that.

Comment from Dr. Bruce Zoecklein at Virginia Tech: Captan is an ergosterol inhibitor. It therefore impacts yeasts ability to control cell import and export. That is a warning shot across the bow on the use of captan as we approach harvest and its potential impact on fermentation. Check with your wine maker about spraying captan after veraison.

For my part, I suggest if the rains keep coming some leaf stripping around the fruit zone, thinning clusters that are touching each other and those lagging behind in maturity, and praying to whoever your god is for sunny and dry weather (maybe with a nice breeze tossed in for good measure). In my experience that is the only condition that really helps with rot diseases.

Birds are moving in and quite fierce in some areas. In today's wine tech meeting Lisa van de Water described accurately described grapes as "bird candy." The function of the vine is to ripen seeds and disseminate them. Birds are the main way to spread the seeds. One grower said birds are bouncing off the nets trying to get at the fruit. My extension colleague on Long Island, Alice Wise, says the situation is very bad up there. She is experimenting with a variety of netting products and will have recommendations after the season but not soon enough to help us now. Nets are, of course, the best solution if you can afford them (see WBM article at <http://www.winebusiness.com/GrapeGrowing/webarticle.cfm?dataId=43363>). I would argue that you cannot afford not to have them, especially if you are an estate winery. The alternatives are available but not as effective. Some growers swear by their bird guards which, I believe, work in low to moderate pressure but not heavy bird pressure. Other pyrotechnics are useful and patrols at dawn and dusk are the effective. You may have to get local permits to use pyrotechnics. It is not a bad idea to make your neighbors aware of why all that noise is coming from your vineyard. Knowing what is happening goes a long way towards peaceful coexistence.

Bee are here, too. The main method I used was to find their nest (usually by accident) and to destroy it. Most experts suggest you hire an expert to destroy a nest. A bad childhood experience confirms that advice. Trapping is the other method and you can hang them in the vineyard by the dozen and see if it helps. Type in "yellow jacket control" into Google for more information. Bee and bird damage creates the opening for opportunistic fungal pathogens to move in and make a mess so anything you can do to prevent both are helpful in the quest for high quality grapes.

Vineyards are starting to pick Foch and Baco. Split berries are being reported in some hybrids. There is still time for this to be a very fine vintage. The weather will determine how good it is.

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