

Tips for Improving Winery Work Flow During Harvest

Benjamin Franklin

“An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.”

Pre Harvest





Pre-Harvest (6-8 weeks out)

- Talk with your local farm or grape seller to see how this year's crop is coming along. Get anticipated harvest time frames.
- Ask your farm or supplier about storage and freezing options to give you time flexibility should you need it.
- Ask about crushing and destemming services to help reduce your processing time if short on labor/time
- Ask about testing options to help reduce your time in the lab. Some farms or suppliers may offer this service for a fee.

Pre- Harvest (4 weeks out)

- Make a detailed list of what you plan to ferment.
- Order supplies such as yeast, nutrients, reagents, at least one month out to avoid supply chain issues.
- Find alternate vendors such as local brew shops and winemaking shops to source ingredients “on the fly” should you run low or have a bastion crop.
- Locate back up equipment. Talk to local winemaking groups, shops, etc to have contacts with equipment should you have equipment fail during the season.

Variety	Juice or Grape	Totes/Drums	Must Vol	Post Press	hL	Makes	Tank	Yeast Used	Amount of Yeast (25g/hL)	Go Ferm (30g/hL)	Fermaid O (40g/hL)
Barbera for Rose	Grape	420 boxes	1554	1219	58.74	1061	1500	Strain A	1468	1762	2349
Lodi Gold Cab Sauv	Grape	140boxes	414	331	15.6	300	500	Strains B/C	391 total or 195 per type	468	624
Mettler Merlot	Grape	345 boxes	1035	828	39.1	750	1000	Strain B	978	1173	1564
Lodi Petite Syrah	Grape	275 boxes	828	662	31.3	600	750	Strain B	782	939	1252
Lanza CS Clone 8	Grape	275 boxes	828	662	31.3	600	750	Strain B	782	939	1252
Cayuga- NY State	Juice	7 totes	2100		79.3	1500, 1950	1000	Strain D	1984	2379	3172
Riesling - CA	Juice	1 tote/3 drums	480		18.2	425	500	Strain E	453	546	728
Chardonnay - CA	Juice	2 totes	600		22.6	550	750	Strain C	567	678	904
Lanza Sauv Blanc	Juice	2 totes	600		22.6	550	750	Strain A	567	678	904
Pinot Grigio - CA	Juice	3 totes, 2 drums	1020		38.5	1000	1000	Strain A	963	1155	1540
Barbera - CA	Juice	2 totes, 2 drums	720		27.2	700	750	Strain A	680	816	1088
										11533	15377
Cayuga/Seyval	Grape							Strain D			
St. Croix/Chambourcin	Grape							Strain D			
Frontenac	Grape							Strain A			
Front Gris	Grape							Strain A			
Jupiter	Grape							Strain D			

Pre-Harvest (4 weeks out)

- Clean, clean, clean! Test out equipment and give everything a wipe down from storage.
- Evaluate any leftover fermentation supplies from last year. If kept in an airtight container, should be good for two years. Obtain fresh sulfites, yeast, and bacteria every year.
- Line up help! Rally the troops of friends. Learn about their availability and schedules

Pre – Harvest (2 weeks out)

- Hold pre-harvest training session for key helpers, demonstrate equipment, cleaning, etc.
- Write up “recipes” on how to mix citric sulfur sanitizer mix and post in key locations
- Create instruction sheets for quick references on cleaning, set up, storage, etc.
- Create a work schedule (if possible) for key helpers and align projects with their availability

Harvest Season



Harvest Season!!

- Consider a staggered or bulk delivery approach
- Is it easier to get a lot of help one or two days and process as much as possible?
- If lacking a lot of help, consider a staggered approach and work with one varietal at a time.
- Lump similar deliveries together such as reds vs whites, juice vs grapes

Crop Assessments

- Pick a random number, such as 6, and count the number of grapes on every 6th plant per row.
- Use this data to glean an average number of grapes per plant
- # of clusters per plant x # of plants per row x # of rows of that variety
- Reference University of Ohio & University of Iowa table for average cluster weights for hybrids
- <https://ohioline.osu.edu/factsheet/HYG-1434-11>
- <https://www.extension.iastate.edu/wine/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/71210estimatinggrapeyield.pdf>
- Gather your own cluster weight data every year to compile a site-specific average



Harvesting Your Farm

- Consider volunteers, wine enthusiasts, and winery “regulars”
- If utilizing volunteers, give realistic time lines for their service (no more than 4 hours)
- Create “shifts” catered to people’s availability and interest
- Consider inviting local groups to harvest (AWS, service organizations)
- Never underestimate a free lunch and bottle of wine!
- Safety and orientation lectures

Organizing Labor

- “Keep Aces in their Places” Think critically about your helpers and their talents and interests and cater their work to that.
- Try to have the same person do the same tasks repeatedly. This improves efficiency.
- Try to work alongside helpers the first time you are demonstrating a task and then have them show you the second time (ex: cleaning)
- “Everything in its place” – Identify storage places for key equipment and tools for easy access

Timing

- Consider pros and cons of bulk deliveries vs processing in small batches. If you have the help, consider having all the grapes arrive at once and have fewer processing days, rather than many small ones.
- Cleaning takes time, allow for cleaning time as part of the plan.
- If you choose to process in bulk, you will have your additions for each wine around the same time which may be easier to track.
- Create a chart of nutrient additions and their appropriate timing so that things don't get forgotten.
- Create a checklist near each fermenting vessel to be sure that each batch got its correct additions.

Thank you