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TO: All Ohio Commercial Wineries

FROM: Todd Steiner, Enology Program Manager and Outreach Specialist

DATE: October 22, 2014

SUBJECT: November Ohio Quality Assurance Program (OQW) Sensory Evaluation

We are pleased to offer the 4th OQW sensory evaluation of Ohio commercial wines in the 2014 Calendar year taking place on November 25, 2014 for seal designation. The OQW program is seeing increased interest and participation which is good to observe. We are once again looking forward to evaluating wines for submittal into the OQW program. Therefore, we would like to cordially invite you to participate and contribute to the progress of our industry by identifying wines of consistent quality throughout the Ohio commercial wine industry from the 2013 or previous vintages.

All Ohio Commercial Wines entered in the November OQW sensory evaluation:

- Scoring high enough (15 points or above) as rated by our panel of five experienced judges are eligible for seal designation assuming all other parameters have been met according to the rules and regulations under the OQW program.
- Are randomly coded, presented in the proper category and flight order to be evaluated blindly on a standard twenty point scale used in most competitions throughout the United States.

As a second standard of quality, chemical analysis will be performed for each wine entry submitted into the seal program relating to Federal (TTB) limits on alcohol, volatile acidity and total sulfur dioxide levels. This is being looked on favorably from media and wine professionals outside of Ohio in providing additional substance and validity of this quality program.

Your wines are as precious to us as they are to you, which are reflected in our careful selection of experienced judges and our sincere efforts to provide as objective an evaluation as possible. In this spirit, we are looking forward to assessing wines to be entered into the November OQW submittal.

- The sensory evaluation will be held on November 25, 2014 at OARDC.
- A minimum of 10 wines is required for the sensory evaluation to be performed. In the event that we do not achieve the minimum amount of wines necessary to perform the sensory evaluation, the wines entered will be evaluated in the next submittal time according to the OQW program guidelines.

As it currently stands, in order to comply with the Ohio Department of Liquor Control regulations, we must adhere to the following procedures: We must buy 3 bottles of each wine to be entered into the competition at retail price. * **Special Note: Since we have tax exempt status, we do not need to pay tax on the wines entered into the OQW sensory evaluation. This is a change we have adopted at OSU/OARDC for all OQW sensory evaluations.**

- **The entry fee for each wine entered into the OQW program is \$50 plus the retail price of 3 bottles of each wine (Not including sales tax).**
- **Entry of a wine that was previously submitted for OQW sensory evaluation that did not receive a sensory score high enough for seal designation can enter the same wine again at the designated \$50 dollar entry fee.**
- **The entry fee covers expenses for staff, facilities, chemical analysis and judge's cost's.**

The first step of the participating winery is to send the entry form and entry fee including the retail price (not including sales tax) of three bottles per entry as soon as possible, along with an invoice for the wines being submitted. Please do not ship the wines at this time, but wait until you receive payment for the wines from the OARDC. The Ohio State University requires each winery reimbursement to be based on the appropriate invoice approved at the College Fiscal Office.

Fortunately, we have approval from the College to purchase wines with the departmental Visa card for prompt reimbursement. Therefore, our departmental fiscal office will be able to take care of this immediately over the phone if the participating winery accepts payment by Visa credit card. Offering this form of payment to participating wineries provides a more efficient process at OSU/OARDC which will definitely expedite the reimbursement process. This process has worked well for the past several years.

For those wineries who do not accept Visa, we will still be able to process your payment as described above through the College Fiscal Office. Therefore, patience is appreciated since this may delay the reimbursement process slightly. However, an earlier entry form submittal would be beneficial in receiving proper payment in time to ship the wines for the OQW program.

This procedure provides us the proper paperwork necessary for confirmation of the purchased wines. We appreciate your patience, understanding and commitment to the OQW program in going through this procedure.

Entry forms for the 2014 OQW program will be posted online at the Ohio Grape Web with the following link, <http://www.oardc.ohio-state.edu/grapeweb/> for printing of entries done by computer. The entry forms and entry fees should be sent to the address listed on the entry form literature.

We would appreciate if you sent the entry forms, entry fees and the invoices as soon as possible, so we can start the process of organization. Thank you! **Entry deadline is November 14, 2014.** In addition, if you would kindly give me a call at (330) 263-3881 or e-mail steiner.4@osu.edu regarding your interest in entering for seal consideration, this will enable us to more accurately determine the final number of wines required for the sensory evaluation to take place. **Entry deadlines will be strict in helping determine the number of wines necessary to perform the sensory evaluation.**

We would also especially like to recognize the Ohio Grape Industries Committee for their support, marketing efforts and assistance with the OQW program for the betterment of the commercial Ohio grape and wine industry. If you are interested in obtaining a copy of the current OQW regulations, please contact Christy Eckstein at OGIC and request a current copy.