Wine Grape Market Development Program Council Meeting

Chateau Thomas Winery - Plainfield, Indiana
April 13, 2015

Present
Mark Easley, Jim Butler, Wilbert Best, Kim Doty, Dave Schrod, Kevin Tonne, Jennifer Lutter, Dr. Marshall Martin, Dr. Brian Farkas, Dr. Hazel Wetzstein, Dr. Bruce Bordelon, Dr. Christian Butzke, Jeanette Merritt, Jill Blume, & Jerry Fankhauser. Industry/Public: Charlie Thomas, Austin Ferguson, Satek Winery and Chateau Thomas Winery staff

Call to Order
The spring council meeting of the Indiana Wine Grape Market Development Program was called to order at 10:05 am by Council Vice President, Kim Doty

Minutes & Financial Reports
Minutes of the December 1, 2014 council meeting and financial information were sent out ahead of the meeting. The minutes were approved as read. Dr. Marshall Martin, director of the Indiana Wine Grape Program, discussed the financial statements including the program’s monthly revenue over the past several months. Marshall noted that program income for this current fiscal year income seems to be tracking very similar to what was seen last fiscal year (July 1, 2013 – June 30, 2014). Budgeting for the upcoming 2015-16 fiscal year will be crafted later this spring when overall income for the year is better understood and university merit pay policy is released. The financial report was approved as presented to the council.

Program Updates & Updates to Old Business
Dr. Christian Butzke, professor of enology, gave an enology program update which included a hard copy handout to council members and others in attendance. Christian talked about the wine grape educational sessions that were held during the Hort Congress meeting back in late January. Christian and Jill Blume, enology specialist, then spoke about the success of the spring wine grape workshop held at Oliver Winery near Bloomington. Over 41 attended as several wineries sent staff to this workshop.

Discussion then ensued about the upcoming Indy International Wine Competition event scheduled for July 29-30th on the campus at Purdue University. The format of this competition will remain the same as last year’s event. A few wineries have asked about being able to view the written comments from judges about their entered wines. A question about number of medals awarded was also posed to Dr. Butzke – about 75-80 percent of wine entered in the competition received a medal. This percentage of medal acknowledgment is a bit lower than most other competitions. The idea of rotating judges from wineries in the state and also how best to assign a wine to a style category was brought up for discussion.

Using a large graphic of wineries across Indiana, Jill Blume, enology specialist, then gave an overview of recent and planned winery visits. Several of these visits will involve newer wineries and others that are planning to open in 2015. Christian also noted that some wineries bring wines to campus for evaluation, guidance, etc. A lot of questions can be addressed both by visiting wineries and/or engaging the program specialists on campus or at workshops.

Jeanette Merritt, marketing director, then gave her marketing update to the council. She explained how she is working, especially with those partners in the agriculture industry, to better expose those in Indiana to the wine grape program and industry. In terms of industry growth, Jeanette noted that there are now 77 wineries with an additional four set to open by the summer of 2015. The Indiana wine grape exhibit is moving to the Grand Hall for this year’s Indiana State Fair. Jeanette is working with the dairy industry to pair wines with cheese for featuring at the state fair.
The updated winery brochure is now completed and at the printer – 100,000 copies are being made and will be shipped out very soon. With so many wineries now, the print size is becoming small and as new wineries open the next few years, a new format to the brochure may need to be considered. June is “wine grape month” here in Indiana, but this acknowledgement has not been a high priority for Jeanette’s marketing budget. Jeanette is trying to complete a state value-added grant for promoting the industry. Jeanette has been appointed to the “Indiana Grown” commission – their charge is to developing marketing strategies to promote Indiana-produced agricultural products. More about the program can be found by going online at: http://www.indianagrown.org/. For the first time in its history, the Indiana Farm Bureau had wine tasting at their annual convention. Over 1,000 samples were poured at this December 2014 event. Indiana Farm Bureau is a strong supporter of the Indiana wine industry. Around 40 Indiana wineries are part of the Indiana Artisan program – this effort, for which Jeanette is a board member of, acknowledges entrepreneurs who create high-quality art. Crafts, and value-added foods.

Planning efforts continues for the June 6, 2015 Vintage Festival which will again be held at Military Park in downtown Indianapolis. This will be the 16th year of the Festival and like last year, the Festival will again partner with the “dots in blue water” charity (Link: http://www.dotsinbluewater.com/index.html). Jeanette talked about the charity and the benefit to the festival effort. The “turning wine into water” (as it relates to helping to provide clean water in Haiti) slogan is catching the interest of media. The 2015 Festival will be one hour shorter than in previous years and ticket prices will remain at the 2014 level which was when the price was raised $10 per ticket. A budget review from the 2014 event was discussed and a hard copy of the 2014 event was included in her marketing report.

Dr. Bruce Bordelon, Professor of Viticulture, then followed up by handing out his viticulture report and noting key efforts and activities. Bruce discussed vine winter injury seen on certain varieties of wine grapes over the winter of 2014-15 and the pruning workshops held in March and early April. At the workshops, he also talked about varietal suitability in parts of Indiana. He, along with the other team members, are looking to submit an Ag SEED proposal for web-based training videos – Ag SEED (Agricultural Research and Extension Leading to Economic Development in Indiana) is an internal (Purdue College of Agriculture) competitive grant program tied to the college’s strategic theme. Bruce then noted insect pest pressure in vineyards including a new invasive pest, the Spotted Wing Drosophila. Marshall Martin then asked if Bruce has published the results of his varietal trials. Bruce responded by saying that most results are available online, but there is value to him working one-on-one with growers in their particular vineyard location for proper variety selection. Marshall then followed with a comment about the possible need for a certificate program for efforts like viticulture program. Council members expressed the view that the professional quality online videos would be very beneficial, but online certificate efforts may be best left to existing national wine and grape educational programs like VESTA (Viticulture Enology Science and Technology Alliance).

New Business

During the working lunch, Dr. Charlie Thomas, owner of Chateau Thomas Winery, was introduced to all and appreciation for hosting the meeting was expressed to him by all in attendance. After lunch, discussion moved into new business and to the issue of more and more out-of-state entities are getting Indiana farm winery permits (Type 305 and/or 305-1) versus an out-of-state (Type 315) permits. This is done so that such wineries or businesses can sell their wine at festivals and events in Indiana. One question is should the council by-laws be updated to reflect this issue in terms of minimizing the impact to the wine grape team. It was noted that if any changes to the by-laws are proposed, such changes should be reviewed by legal counsel. Those at the meeting are unclear if such out-of-state wineries can ship bulk wine to Indiana for bottling and if this growth in permits is problem for the wine grape program. Such a legal review may be possible through the newer internal counsel office at Purdue University.
Council president, Mark Easley, and director, Marshall Martin, asked the council what is the collective thought on addressing this out-of-state permit growth? Having one or two council members coming to campus to visit with legal counsel at the university may be a good approach. Having specific permit type as it relates to Indiana farm wineries added to the council by-laws may also be worth pursuing.

Director Marshall Martin then moved discussion to the strategic plan. This survey and planning effort was led by Dr. Maria Marshall in Purdue Agricultural Economics. The three most noted topics coming the 20-30 wineries that responded to the survey include:

1. Business planning for new winery or winery expansion
2. Human resource and employee management issues

Marshall asked if the team or council had any comments about timing and content for publications and/or webinar-based training related to these two areas. Bruce Bordelon was unsure if such webinar efforts would have value to those across the state, noting that they could become outdated rather quickly.

**Indiana Winery & Vineyard Association (IWVA) Update**

On behalf of the IWVA president, Rick Black, Jim Butler gave a brief update about the status of state shipping legislation being discussed at present – progress looks good for a new shipping law by this summer. The association summer meeting will be held on July 21st at Country Heritage Winery near the Town of Laotto in northeastern Indiana. Rick Black is hoping that the wine grape team will be available for this workshop. Planning is now beginning for the 2016 Hort Congress meetings. It was noted that it would be helpful if the wine grape team could provide planning date deadlines to the association – this should help with keeping all plans moving forward as rooms at the Wyndham Hotel, out-of-state speakers, etc. need to be secured well ahead of this annual meeting. IWVA members hope to come up with topics and speaker recommendations either during monthly call-in meetings or at the July summer meeting and should pass them along to the wine grape team when known – preferably much of the topic information by August 1st. To maintain professional quality of such topics, it was noted that the wine grape team should remain involved in this programming planning for the Hort Congress event.

Mark Easley then asked if there is any other council member feedback on the strategic plan or other council-related issues. More discussion ensued regarding type and quality level of possible webinar and video education efforts. It was also mentioned that the IWVA is looking to apply for a 2016 specialty crop block grant from the Indiana State Department of Agriculture. This is, most likely, the same funding source as what Jeanette Merritt is seeking for wine grape industry promotion.

The need for 205-17 Council officers was brought up by Marshall Martin. Nominations were soon made and after very brief discussion and a motion to move to a voting, the following council members were elected:

**2015-16 Indiana Wine Grape Council Officers**

- President – Kim Doty
- Vice-President – Mark Easley
- Secretary – Jennifer Lutter

The council ended the meeting ended with discussion about a date and location for a fall 2015 meeting. Council member Kevin Tonne offered to host this meeting at Tonne Winery near the City of Muncie. A date of Thursday, November 12th looks to work for all at present. At 2:03 pm, there was a motion and second to adjourn the meeting.

Prepared by: Jerry Fankhauser