

Vineland

Research and Innovation Centre

NEWS

Summer 2010

Driving
Innovation
for Canadian
Horticulture

Vineland Research and Innovation Centre in Action

A Report from Dr. Jim Brandle, CEO

Welcome to the first edition of Vineland Research and Innovation Centre's quarterly newsletter. Given this is our first issue we have a lot to catch up on. I hope you enjoy it.



Vineland was established in 2007 as a not-for-profit organization dedicated to advancing the horticulture sector. With funding from Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC), the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA) and support from the Agricultural Research Institute of Ontario, Vineland is leading a new research and innovation vision. I am pleased to report that we are in full operation and making good progress with our fruit and vegetable, grape and wine, and ornamental and greenhouse stakeholders.

Revitalizing our ageing facilities has always been integral to Vineland's success. In April, the Honourable Gary Goodyear, Minister of State joined a large crowd to announce a \$1 million grant for a newly-renovated business incubation centre that will provide facilities on campus for start-up companies and agri-businesses. Partners in this facility join tenants already resident at Vineland including Canadian Nursery

and Landscape Association, Flowers Canada (Ontario), Hoogendoorn Amercia Inc., The Foreign Affair Winery, National Research Council, vDE AMERICAS, and Cleanlight.

Vineland is now one year into delivery of research and commercialization activities for Ontario horticulture under Growing Forward, a federal-provincial-territorial agreement. To begin the process, in 2009 we consulted with Ontario groups to determine their research priorities, a process which will be conducted annually in partnership with OMAFRA. Research projects in this program will include developing new vegetable crops, biocontrol alternatives and genetic applications for improved traits in flowers and fruit.

At Vineland we are taking a new approach to scientific discovery and commercialization opportunities for Canadian horticulture. I welcome you to visit our campus and meet with Vineland, AAFC, OMAFRA and University of Guelph researchers.

INNOVATION CORNER

Tempwave™



Combating freezing and frost damage is a serious matter for grape and tender fruit growers. A new innovation being tested at Vineland will offer an alternative solution to managing crop loss risks. The Tempwave™ system uses low-level microwave radiant heat to prevent cold-related damage to crops. Field trials will continue this winter.

Upcoming Events...

July 12th - Vineland is hosting an Organic & Sustainable Agriculture Symposium with guest speaker Dr. Ralph Martin, Director, Organic Agriculture Centre of Canada. Along with Dr. Martin, presenters will offer production and retail perspectives. Growers through to retailers will be interested in this session.

September 12th - Vineland and Master Gardeners of Ontario are partnering to deliver a short course on practical applications of science in the garden. Visit www.vinelandresearch.com to download a registration form.

REPORT FROM THE CHAIR Donald Ziraldo

It has been a real pleasure and challenge to be a part of developing Vineland Research and Innovation Centre from the beginning, first as Chair of the Renaissance Panel in 2006 and today as Chair of the Board of Directors. In addition to our primary work in research, Vineland finds itself involved in a number of activities related to the horticulture industry including agricultural sustainability, local food, commercialization and regional business development.

One initiative of special interest is being led by the "appassimento" group. Wineries, grape growers, greenhouse operators, Niagara College and the Cool Climate Oenology and Viticulture Institute are collaborating with Vineland to develop a strategy for adapting the appassimento drying process to produce Amarone-style wines and new signature varieties with higher concentration. This is a technique that some wineries are already using. Raffaele Boscini from Masi wines in Italy joined us recently to share his expertise. Research from this partnership will soon be available to Canadian grape and wine producers.

Understanding the Consumer Mind

A new research analysis tool at Vineland may revolutionize consumer science for the horticulture industry. This tool is the brainchild of Dr. Howard Moskowitz, a well-known experimental psychologist, an inventor of world-class market research technology and a member of Vineland's Science Advisory Committee.

Dr. Isabelle Lesschaeve and her research team are using this innovative and fast market research tool to better understand how marketer messages play in consumer minds. Lesschaeve credits this approach with blending marketing and science for speedier and more accurate results.

"This tool helps us connect the dots between what consumers want and their subsequent actions. For example, consumers might show great interest in seeing the new Canadian Organic logo on produce. However, they might not be willing to pay a premium for it. IdeaMap® helps connect the mind and emotions with the wallet – what people will spend."

To date results show that respondents have had a positive predisposition to buy fruits and vegetables that were



Sensory Lab, Vineland Research and Innovation Centre

reinforced by produce visuals, logos certifying Ontario origin, and accessibility. Claims related to good taste and quality weren't effective. Women were more responsive to organic signals, produce freshness, and low price. Men weren't interested in organics and were not driven by social or environmental concerns. Suburban respondents chose local food to support the local economy, but were price-driven. Urban respondents were interested mainly in Ontario logos and accessibility.

Lesschaeve and her team will be elaborating their findings and discussing the implications with local and organic producers. A wine component will be included as the study evolves.

Sunrise Greenhouses, A Vineland Partner



Rodney Bierhuizen, manager of a 200,000-square-foot greenhouse says in Vineland Research and Innovation Centre he's found a research partner that has the vision, expertise, and a collaborative approach to creating

exciting varieties. "Vineland can help to develop new products that are unique to our market. With Dr. Daryl Somers, they have a strong plant breeding department that knows how to make things happen."

Floriculturists like Bierhuizen are always on the hunt for the next great plant variety with tweaks like new colour, longer flowering and size that will satisfy the consumer. Bierhuizen also has to be sure a wide range of potted plants make it to his wholesalers on time, on budget, in top quality, and of uniform shape and size.

"Vineland brings things full circle through great marketing expertise. So before work begins on developing a new product through breeding or production practice, much of the marketing groundwork has been covered by Dr. Isabelle Lesschaeve and her team. They will have already done in-depth research so that we know for certain what will pique consumers' interest."

For more information about Sunrise Greenhouses, visit www.sunrisegreenhouses.ca