

**Mid-term Progress Report**  
**Virginia Wine Board, 27 January 2016**

**Title:** Viticulture Research and Extension Associate

**Principal Investigator:**

Dr. Tony K. Wolf  
AHS Jr. Agricultural Research and Extension Center  
595 Laurel Grove Rd., Winchester VA 22602  
(540) 869-2560 extn. 18 [vitis@vt.edu](mailto:vitis@vt.edu)

**Type of Project:** Extension  
**Amount funded:** \$8,000

**Objective:**

To increase the level of viticultural research and extension program support to grape and wine producers in Virginia and to help meet the research and extension needs of an expanding industry.

**Progress:**

The scope and continued expansion of the Virginia grape industry merits increased personnel support to provide extension, technical support of viticultural issues that constrain industry development. Part of this support is provided by Virginia Cooperative Extension assets, including state level *specialists* (e.g., Wolf, Bergh, Pfeiffer, Nita and others), local extension *agents* (e.g., Love, Sutphin, Lachance, Sastre and others), as well as graduate students, post-doctoral associates, research associates and classified staff. This project provides supplemental travel and material support, primarily for Tremain Hatch, at Virginia Tech's Winchester Agricultural Research and Extension Center. Tremain Hatch was hired as a Viticulture Research/Extension Associate in 2010, after completion of his MSc degree in viticulture at Virginia Tech. Salary and fringe benefit support for Mr. Hatch's position is provided by a 50:50 partnership of funding from the USDA/NIFA and from the Virginia Agricultural Experiment Station. As such, Mr. Hatch has responsibilities to the stewardship of the Specialty Crops Research Initiative grant (USDA/NIFA) and roughly 50% of his time is available to directly support Virginia viticultural extension programs. This Wine Board grant only provides travel and material support of the 50% of his position devoted to viticulture extension. To a much lesser extent, the funding also supports a portion of Dr. Tony Wolf's viticulture extension travel (examples of which are provided below).

Mr. Hatch conducted the following activities/outputs over the first half of Fiscal Year 2016 (July 2015-January 2016) as related to his 50% time commitment to viticulture extension activities:

## Specific Activities

- Conducted 33 individual vineyard visits to help grape growers assess vineyard site suitability, review existing vineyard operations, and trouble-shoot vineyard problems.
- Organized and participated in eight vineyard meetings across the state, including:
  - Attended an VCE fruit growers tour of Frederick county VA [16 July] and gave an overview of wine grape production in Northern Virginia.
  - Gave overview of grape growing to audience at SOVA Agricultural Experience [19 Sept.]
  - Gave an overview of the Virginia wine industry to Virginia Legislators, highlighting the industry's preparations and response to impacts of climate change [19 Sept.]
  - Organized and participated in a successful new grower workshop [11 November] for 54 attendees at the AHS AREC.
  - Gave an update of invasive pests to seminar supported by the Congressional Invasive Pest Caucus and Congressional Wine Caucus [16 Nov].
- Sent 144 email messages to grape growers, including 23 responses to new clientele exploring the prospects of commercial grape growing in Virginia
- Authored a viticulture notes article update on dormancy and cold hardiness [Dec].
- Made or answered 35 extension-related phone calls to grape growers
- Served as an expert resource on eViticulture's (<http://eviticulture.org/>) *Ask an Expert* feature
- Responsible for regular updates to the viticulture website (<http://www.arec.vaes.vt.edu/alson-h-smith/grapes/viticulture/extension/index.html>)
- Served as primary author/developer of a new Vineyard Financial Calculator, an Excel spreadsheet that allows the user to model and evaluate different scenarios to understand vineyard costs and returns.
  - Tremain is working with Dr. Gordon Groover to publish this tool as a peer review extension bulletin
- Served as lead researcher on a vineyard trial evaluating the merits of converting from cordon-training and spur-pruning to head-training and cane pruning with Cabernet Sauvignon vines at the AHS Agricultural Research and Extension Center.
  - Reports on this project was presented at the VVA Winter Technical meeting in 2015 and the ASEV meeting in June in Portland OR.

Some funds were also used to support extension travel and other expenses of Tony Wolf, which included several site visits during late-summer and fall.

**Summary:** Project is proceeding as proposed, with a number of meeting scheduled for the second half of the fiscal year.

Major extension meetings attended by Viticulture Research/Extension Associate and/or T.K. Wolf, July – December 2015.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Point of travel</b>	<b>Nature of visit</b>	<b>Mileage</b>
16-Jul	Winchester, VA	Frederick County farm tour	23
20-Jul	Shenandoah and Loudoun County	3 established vineyard sites	143
29-Jul	Culpepper, Louisa, Fauquier, Loudoun Counties	4 established vineyard sites	286
6 &7-Aug	Botetourt, Natural Bridge, Staunton, Pittsylvania Co.	2 established vineyards and 2 new sites	794
20-Aug	Nelson, Rappahannock, Fauquier	4 established vineyard sites	305
19-Sep	Pittsylvania, Madison Co.	Talks at SOVA Ag. Experience and Corks and Climate Change Legislative Retreat	450
5-Oct	Shenandoah County and Loudoun County	Vineyard visit to a potential site	164
13-Nov	Olean and Marshall, VA	New vineyard site and fertilizer pickup	108
16-Nov	Washington, DC	Reduce Risks from Invasive Species Coalition, seminar	180
2-Dec	Blacksburg, VA	Campus visit with Dr. Gordon Groover, Development of a Vineyard Budget	462