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<https://www.wine-searcher.com/regions-washington>

# Navigating Sustainable WA Wine Grape Audits: How to Avoid Common Pitfalls

Tamara Richardson | Technical Advisor

EAGLE Certification Group includes EAGLE Registrations Inc. and EAGLE Food Registrations Inc.

# General Issues

- ▶ Lack of documented evidence. Evidence can include:
  - ▶ Email chains, texts, photos
- ▶ 70% overall, and in each section to pass
- ▶ You can make corrective actions, and corrective action plans – continuous improvement is the goal
- ▶ Use the standard and appendices to guide practices and programs, do not just quote the standard, examples needed
- ▶ Many WSU and OSU resources for programs



# Section 2. Human Resources



- Misconception that policies only apply to farm labour; other staff are relevant too!
- Employee Handbook and Workplace Policies must be made available to employees
- Worker Orientation and Training – have training logs, APP, ERP, 1<sup>st</sup> Aid certificates/training documentation available
- Farm Labour Contractors - license #, ensure contractor is following labour laws.





# Section 3. Vineyard Establishment & Acquisition



- ▶ Most of this section can be N/A if vineyard established when purchased.
- ▶ If and when purchasing/leasing new sites review this section
- ▶ Planting Material - Invoices from suppliers, any plant passport documentation
- ▶ Irrigation System - Ideally designed by a CID, invoices, websites, irrigation plans
- ▶ Irrigation Source – water licenses, permits, invoices, should be able to demonstrate limits, etc. water rights documentation



# Section 4 - Viticulture



- ▶ Documentation of canopy management, crop phenology, fruit quality (TA, Brix, pH etc.), harvest estimates vs actual
  - ▶ Calendars
  - ▶ Text chains
  - ▶ Emails
  - ▶ Spreadsheets





# Section 5 - Water Management



- ▶ H<sub>2</sub>O Quality Testing –not just TC and EC. pH, NO<sub>3</sub>, salts, Mg, Ca, Na, Cl, B, HCO<sub>3</sub>, Mn, Dissolved solids etc.
- ▶ Water Use - Total inches of water use to be documented. Calculate average per acre for all area farmed.
- ▶ Pumping efficiency
- ▶ Irrigation System DU– checks involve evaluating the distribution of water over a given area to ensure even application



# Irrigation System DU – How to Check!

1. Place catch cans at regular intervals across a block to collect water.
2. Run the irrigation system for a set period.
3. Measure and document the location and amount of water in each catch can.
4. Arrange the volumes collected from least to greatest.
5. Calculate average of the lowest 25% of measurements.
6. Calculate overall average of all measurements.
7.  $DU \% = (\text{average of lowest } 25\% \div \text{total average}) \times 100$

Higher DU percentage indicates better uniformity, values generally above 80% considered acceptable, aim for 90% or above is often the goal for optimal water distribution. Maintain system, service pumps, check lines etc.



# Section 6 - Soil Management Plan



- ▶ Identify sensitive zones – wind & water erosion, compaction and describe how this is mitigated – cover crops, large boom sprayer to reduce tractor use etc.
- ▶ Nutrition program – soil tests, foliar tests, fruit quality goals, changes based crop estimates etc.
- ▶ Some plans are lacking site specific detail
- ▶ Refer to appendix A for requirements





# USDA Web Soil Survey Tool is a Great Resource To Start With!

| Soil Type   | WaB   |
|---|---|
| USDA Farmland Classification  | Prime Farmland  |
| Soil Texture  | silt Loam   |
| Soil Depth  | >200 cm   |
| Soil Drainage   | well drained  |
| Soil Organic Matter   | 1.47  |
| Slope   | Vineyard 0-1% slope. South facing slope at south edge $\leq$ 8% |
| Flooding Frequency Class  | Flooding not probable   |
| Ponding Frequency Class   | None  |
| K-Factor Whole Soil Water Erosion Index (rill and sheet erosion factor tons/acre/hour/inch of rain) | 0.43  |
| Wind Erodability Group  | 5 (moderate to low)   |



# Section 7 – Pest, Weed, Vertebrate & Bird Management



- ▶ Do not just quote the standard
- ▶ Identify specific issues, but be aware of others that may arise
- ▶ WSU Field Guide for IPM Management and Appendix A has all the info you need
- ▶ Document monitoring – quantitative where possible
- ▶ Need to monitor weekly and also beneficials for full marks





# Section 8 - Prohibited Materials and Watch Lists

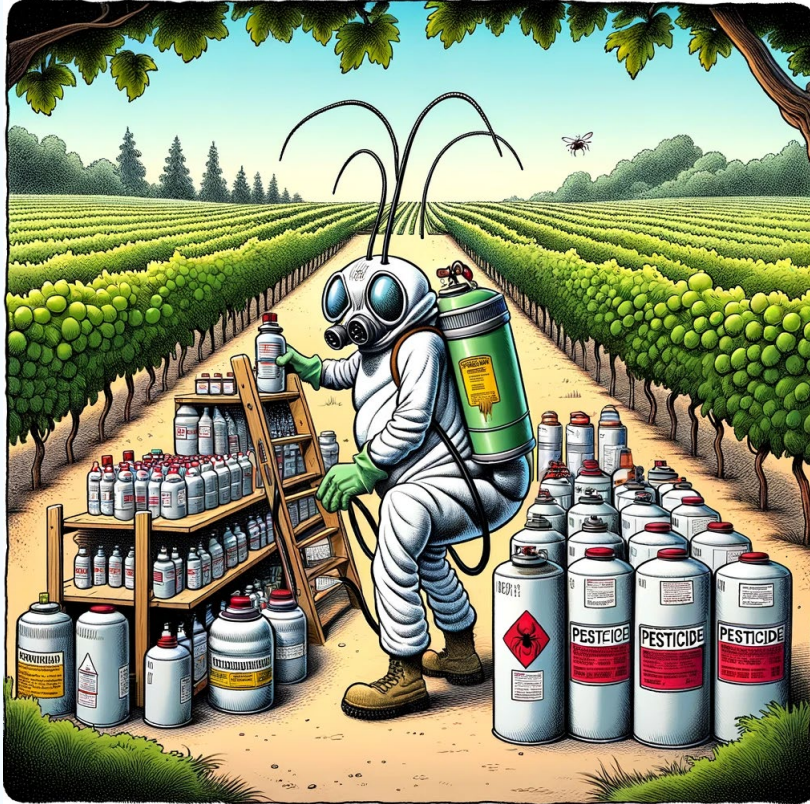


- ▶ Pesticide Use: Prohibited Materials and Watch Lists – cross check active ingredients with watch lists, and check for “warning” and “danger”
- ▶ These are OK WITH written justification – back it up- severe problem, and evidence that you are rotating with less harmful inputs
- ▶ Ask your PCA, chemical company for less harmful inputs





# Section 8 – Materials Handling



- ▶ Even if you are organic, you must store PPP properly and follow all BMPs!
- ▶ Need documented drift management practices
  - ▶ Can be part of IPM plan
- ▶ Pesticide Application - Mandatory to level 3
  - ▶ Licensed private PPP applicator or commercial PPP applicator is on premises and actively supervises all applications
  - ▶ All pesticide applications are documented, including date, time, weather and reason for application



# Section 9 - Whole Farm Ecosystem & Community



- ▶ Maps- tend to be missing PPP storage, wild habitat environmentally sensitive sites, environmental features, and neighboring properties.
- ▶ Ecosystem plan should include identification of and practices that support:
  - ▶ natural corridors/natural enemy refuges
  - ▶ biodiversity enhancement
  - ▶ management of invasive species
  - ▶ Management of sensitive areas
  - ▶ threatened/endangered species

