Coonawarra EMP

In 2002 the Coonawarra Grapegrowers Association (CGA) commenced discussions on the development of an Environmental Management Plan for the region. Over the proceeding twelve months, the Association invited a number of leaders in the wine industry from varying facets of the industry to Coonawarra to address the members on their respective environmental management opinions. These guests gave the Coonawarra Grapegrowers a good understanding of the importance of environmental management and sustainability as well the various approaches that were available to a wine region.

In early 2003, the full membership of the CGA agreed to proceed with and Environmental Management Plan (EMP) for the Coonawarra Wine Region. This Plan which was also fully supported by the Coonawarra Vignerons Association (CVA) would initially cover vineyards and develop in the future to encompass wineries.

Finlaysons Lawyers were then appointed by the CGA to undertake an analysis of the legal risks facing the growers, out of which the 5 -10 key environmental issues would be identified. In October 2003, Finlaysons researched 25 growers, the results of which, was presented to the members in November 2003. At present the CGA is solidifying our key risks and identifying the strategies and benchmarks that need to be established to address them.

- Legal review completed and tabled to all members
- Regional risk identification and executive stewardship assigned (see below)

Waste Management – Michael Cornish

- CCA post disposal & management
- Recycling opportunities
- Waste oil management
- *Regional solid & liquid volume register*
- *Complaints register*

Water Extraction – Chris Brodie

- Accurate recording of use
- Review of PAV – impact on Coonawarra
- Impact of use during frost periods
- Drain C impact
- *Quality & volume of resource*
- *Recharging of aquifer*
- *Impact of fuel storage on resource*
- *Are current management practises sustainable?*

Biodiversity & Conservation – CGA Tech Sub Committee Daniel Lamb

- Assessment of management practices on vineyard ecosystems
- Research priority register
- Use of native species in vineyard floor management
- *Identification & register of noxious weeds*
- *Impact of prolonged herbicide use on soil ecosystem*

Chemical Storage & Use – Shane Mills

- Chemical shed waste water management

- Spray drift – tourists, neighbours, off target damage
- *Use of buffer zones*
- *Containment procedures*
- *Impact of waste water disposal on soil & water*
- *Manifest details for CFS*

Phylloxera Control – Max Arney/Brendan Provis

- Management plan to handle infestation
- Education & protocols
- Risk identification

Native Vegetation

- *Register of native vegetation orders*
- *Sponsorship*

Michael Cornish presented a regional overview to an Executive Meeting of SAWAB and Karen Ronning attended a workshop convened by Winemakers Federation of Australia, at both forums the progress and approach taken by Coonawarra was commended and seen as model to demonstrate actions without bureaucracy.

Regional launch (By Dennis Mutton) September 2004 and release of hard cover EMP folder.

Producing the plan is just the start of sustainable environment management in Coonawarra, now we will act on the issues identified in the plan. These actions will include;

- Intensive grower training on issues such was irrigation efficiency, integrated pest management and waste management. To assist with the training we will be making use of resources such as the Research to Practice workshops and TAFE.
- Ongoing lobbying and involvement in issues to insure the communities' water resources are not threatened.
- Identifying funding sources for a pilot programme to employ a resource management person to help further develop and manage our plan.

Actively recruiting suitable individuals/organisation to assist in steering the EMP, through a Project Officer.

Stuart Sharman