



Southern Maryland Growing Grapes for Wine Program

Guidelines and Application 2008

The purpose of the 2008 **Southern Maryland Growing Grapes for Wine Program** ("Grape Program") is to encourage the development of a wine industry in Southern Maryland. Matching grant funds will be made available to purchase grape vines in bulk from a list of recommended grape varieties for growers throughout the five Southern Maryland Counties.

The program will be administered by the Southern Maryland Agricultural Development Commission (Commission) in coordination with Maryland Cooperative Extension. The Commission will provide up to 50% of matching funds to purchase vines in the winter of 2008 and coordinate purchasing. Maryland Cooperative Extension will provide training and production expertise. Mandatory participation in a two-day workshop conducted by Maryland Cooperative Extension will be required for all participants prior to receiving vines (see below). **Applications due April 30, 2008.**

Eligibility

To be eligible for participation in the Program, an applicant must own, or be a co-applicant with the owner of, at least 5 acres of land in agricultural use. It is not necessary to have taken the Tobacco Buyout, but no tobacco may be produced on the land for human consumption.

Criteria for Selection

No experience is necessary, but a demonstration of long-term commitment is required. Applicants will be evaluated and selected based on the following priority criteria:

1. The number of acres to be placed in the program:
 - A minimum of 1 acre of grape vines, up to a maximum of 3 acres of grape vines.
2. Existing vineyard equipment
3. A business plan
4. The suitability and productivity of the land for grape production based on its soil classification, physical features, and location.

Application Procedure

Anyone interested in applying to the Program may request an application from the Commission. The application will request at least the following information:

1. A vision of farm production goals, financial expectations and time lines and how the participation in the program would increase on-farm income
2. A United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Natural Resources and Conservation Service map and farm plan, or its equivalent, showing the breakdown of various soil types and acreage possessing soil capability classes I through VI, and the following:
 - The land area to be planted to grape vines
3. A full description of the current agricultural activities carried out on the land including the types and quantity of the crops, number of livestock, and/or acreage leased or used by others for agricultural purposes
4. A statement indicating whether the applicant either currently participates (**or anticipates** participating and when) in any other federal, state or county programs
5. A statement of the present financial situation of the farm including the gross farm income and copies of Schedule F form for the most recent three tax years
6. **If the owner is not principally engaged in agricultural activities**, a statement must be submitted by the owner regarding the short and long-term plans for keeping the property in agricultural use

7. A copy of the current deed(s) to all the parcels of the property described in (2), and a plan recorded in the registry of deeds delineating the property, book, and page numbers included
8. Authorization for the Commission to conduct a field inspection of the land to be covered by the Plan. Upon receipt of an application, the Council may conduct a field inspection.
9. An agreement that the grower will adhere to the viticultural recommendations in the application.

Application Evaluation

The following process will be followed to evaluate and approve the applications based on the above-listed criteria. Accepted applicants will be notified in writing of their acceptance into the Program. All information is held confidential.

- Applications are reviewed by either an Advisory Review Committee or the Agricultural Infrastructure Committee.
- Recommendations are provided to the SMD Agricultural Development Commission.
- Final approval will be made by the SMD Agricultural Development Commission.

Application Approval

Upon approval of an application, the grower must participate in one of the grape production workshops offered by Cooperative Extension (registration fees may be covered by the Commission) prior to receiving the vines.

PHASE II: PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

1. Any farmer who has an approved application may then order grape vines from a recommended list of vines through the program in minimum lots of 25 per bundle. (75% of total must come from recommended varieties and 25% can be own choice).

Proposed Timelines

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| April 30, 2008 | Applications due back to Commission |
| May 2008 | Applications reviewed, applicants notified |
| Jan.-April 2009 | Vines disbursed |

For more information and an application, please call or visit or write to us:



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