



November 30, 2009

Dear Member,

In April 2007, the Napa County Farm Bureau (NCFB), Napa Valley Grapegrowers (NVG), and the Napa Valley Vintners (NVV), were approached by an advocacy group called Preserving the Integrity of Napa's Agriculture (P.I.N.A.), who hoped to engage the Napa County winegrowing community in a discussion addressing the evolution and use of genetically engineered organisms (GEOs) in viticulture and winemaking. Recent debates between the agriculture and environmental communities precipitated by anti-GEO initiatives in California counties have raised awareness that education is a preferred alternative to the adversarial and costly challenge associated with political confrontation.

The following definition distinguishes genetically engineered crops from traditional plant breeding: A GEO is an organism developed through the artificial insertion of foreign genes to introduce a new trait. A gene from any source (from the same or another species or even a synthetic gene) is inserted into the host organism using various methods such as recombinant DNA techniques (in which bacteria and viruses carry in the foreign genes) or projectile methods (such as a gene gun). The genetic engineering process inserts a cluster of genes including: the gene of interest; a promoter gene to turn on the desired trait; and a marker gene to indicate whether the insertion process worked.

The NCFB, NVG, NVV, and P.I.N.A. met monthly to study the promise and consequences of GEO usage and the potential impact of GE crops, yeast, and bacteria should they be used by the Napa County wine industry. The reading list from these sessions was extensive and is available to all members; please phone your organization to receive a copy. The following position is the culmination of over a year of education and discourse, and is a collaborative effort of the NCFB, NVG, and the NVV crafted to define industry consensus around the use of GEOs in Napa County's wine industry. Further the Statement is consistent with the Wine Institute's position which is, "The position of the Wine Institute is that no genetically modified organisms be used in the production of California wine."

This position may serve until a future time when substantive regulatory framework will govern GEO usage.

It is the intent of the Napa County Farm Bureau, Napa Valley Grapegrowers, Napa Valley Vintners, and Preserving the Integrity of Napa's Agriculture (P.I.N.A.) to promote education and understanding addressing the risks as well as the potential promise of genetically engineered organisms (GEO) and their place in Napa Valley viticulture and winemaking.

Until a clear and independent assessment of the risks and/or benefits to consumers and the environment associated with the exposure to or the consumption of genetically engineered products can be reached and a satisfactory regulatory framework is in place, we believe that there should be no GEO usage in Napa County.

We encourage any members with questions or concerns to contact us.

Sincerely,

Jim Lincoln
President
NCFB

Bruce Phillips
President
NVG

Paula Kornell
President
NVV

Dr. Robert Moore
Co-coordinator
PINA