



## Summary of 2016 Report to the Industry

Throughout British Columbia, the burgeoning wine industry continues to grow in scale and global renown after every successful vintage.

As the regional vineyards and wineries strive to improve environmental efficiency, implement sustainable practices, and foster better customer connections, Sustainable Winegrowing British Columbia (SWBC) is creating innovative educational opportunities for farmers, winemakers, and hospitality workers to improve their environmental impacts.

### WHAT IS SUSTAINABLE WINEGROWING BC?

Created by a team of British Columbia farmers, winemakers, sustainability experts, and marketing specialists, Sustainable Winegrowing British Columbia is an initiative of the BC Wine Grape Council.

SWBC offers free membership to grape growers and winemakers throughout the region, providing them with access to online assessments, educational resources, and training to help them establish and promote sustainable practices for the region's vineyards and wineries.

### Our History

Members of the British Columbia Wine Grape Council (BCWGC) called for the creation of a BC-based sustainability program in 2008. The council hired Insight Environmental Consulting to research successful sustainability programs around the world. Then, they integrated their best principles into a sustainability program designed to address every level of the regional wine industry: from the vineyards to the wineries and even service and hospitality.

In this way, SWBC created a concrete set of practices for grape growers, winemakers, and service providers to assess their sustainability, with an eventual objective of providing certification options for achieving the program's standards.

## The Early Years

For the first years, the SWBC produced hard copy assessments and guidebooks for members. By 2011, an online tool was developed that improved efficiency for recording, managing, and tallying evaluations. After a gap in funding in 2012, the BCWGC regained financing from the federal program Growing Forward 2 in 2014.

Today, membership in the SWBC program provides access to three sustainability self-assessments and reference guides that outline an action plan for tracking and improving performance. Beyond these tools, SWBC also provides workshops, presentations, and other educational resources for participants.

## SUSTAINABILITY ASSESSMENT GOALS FOR 2016

Each year we create a progress report for the industry to gain an understanding of the effectiveness of Sustainable Winegrowing British Columbia.

The 2016 Report to Industry evaluated participation levels, outreach and educational effectiveness, the value of the program's formatting and content, its potential for fostering collaboration and building partnerships, and the progress made towards creating a sustainable certification system for members.

A summary of the report's findings is below:

- **Participation:** Completion of assessments increased from 12 in 2011 to 35 in 2016, mostly due to proactive engagement within the industry.

- **Educational Outreach:** SWBC led numerous presentations, workshops, and interviews to increase awareness about the program, encourage people to complete assessments, and, when necessary, provide help for technology questions relating to the program.
- **Program Content and Formatting:** The SWBC sustainability assessments and guidebooks are continually improved based on participant feedback to enhance their long-term usefulness.
- **Partnership Building:** SWBC continues to collaborate with other winegrowing regions and is striving to learn from the challenges that they faced when improving their programs.
- **Certification Progress:** SWBC is continuing to conduct a review of certification programs around the world to inform the process of creating its certification system.

## Next Steps

Based on feedback from program participants and input from the sustainability committee that leads SWBC, the following priorities have been identified for the next few years.

- Create a long-term plan for funding and program administration
- Foster beneficial relationships between industry leaders, scientists, and educational institutes
- Provide more learning opportunities such as workshops and presentations
- Implement an original certification system for farmers and winemakers
- Improve access to educational events for participants
- Offer on-site assistance for implementing sustainable practices for farmers

Sustainable Winegrowing British Columbia has made tremendous progress for the sustainability of the wine industry throughout western Canada. We invite you to [join us as members](#) as we continue to strive for environmental innovation and support for farmers, winemakers, and hospitality workers within the world of wine production.