

Viticulture Advisory Committee Meeting

11/18/25

Minutes

1. **Welcome:** Steve Dutton

Meeting called order at 3:00pm

Present: John Azevedo, Bob Dempel, Joe Dutton, Steve Dutton, Nick Frey, Joan Patrick, Mark Sanchiotti, Jim Young, Karissa Kruse, Ryan Stapleton, Nicole Hayden.

Staff: Connor Murphy, Merilark Padgett, Victor Tam, Janet Stribling, Amy Merkel, Ann Mansfield.

Absent: John Balletto, Chris Bowland, Michael Sangiacomo, Brent Young, Mel Sanchiotti.

2. **Approval of minutes: Motion** to approve minutes from 5/6/25 from Karissa Kruse, second from Joe Dutton. Motion approved.

3. **SRJC and Ag/NR update: Victor Tam**

The meeting covered enrollment updates across science departments, with overall growth of 7.5% despite some declines in specific programs like viticulture and wine studies. Victor reported that Shone Farm enrollment was up 9% and discussed their expanded transportation program using Uber, which will be extended to additional pickup locations in the spring. The Chancellor's office awarded a \$300,000 grant to expand the wildfire resilience program.

4. **Viticulture program update: Merilark Padgett**

Merilark presented spring course offerings for viticulture and wine studies while expressing optimism about future enrollment improvements

Sanchiotti Farming Contract

Mark announced his contract with SRJC has been renewed for five years.

5. **Winery Contracts & 2025 Harvest Results:**

Mark provided a detailed overview of grape production across the blocks on the ranch, highlighting strong performance in several areas and successful deals with clients like Rombauer, Gallo, and Jackson Family. He noted that contracts for most blocks are in place, with some potential for tonnage adjustments and negotiations in the coming year. Mark expressed interest in exploring new opportunities and maintaining strong relationships with existing clients, while also acknowledging the uncertainty of future market conditions.

Mark discussed the current state of the vineyard and harvest logistics, noting that machine harvesting was more prevalent this year due to better alignment with winery partners. He highlighted that approximately 25-30% of certain blocks could be machine-harvested, though some blocks, like Block 2, require manual harvesting due to specific agreements with wineries. He also mentioned the availability of wine for the next two years and suggested exploring the feasibility of producing a smaller, community-focused wine project, drawing from past experiences of similar initiatives. She emphasized the importance of determining the minimum viable amount to produce and sell, considering the challenges of securing consistent support from the community.

6. Update on Well Project Shone Farm: Mark Sanchietti

Well drilling project is complete. Mark discussed improvements at Shone Farm Vineyard, including the installation of potable water and power in the vineyard area, funded by grants. He noted that these improvements have streamlined operations and enhanced trust between the farm and visitors. Also mentioned that a rainwater capture project, previously discussed, is on hold due to funding constraints, but remains a potential future project.

7. New Business:

Karissa Kruse announced a new partnership with Reservoir, a public-private initiative helping California's specialty crop growers stay competitive through climate-smart innovation. In Sonoma County, the program will connect viticulture startups with local vineyards to pilot technologies that improve resource efficiency, yields, and sustainability. By pairing innovation with job training and local reinvestment, Reservoir strengthens both rural economies and long-term agricultural resilience. There are five startup proposals already in progress. A wine reception announcement event is set for December 3rd at 2:30 PM, at the Sonoma County Winegrowers headquarters.

A dedication event was also announced for the Kirk Lokka Student Lounge at Shone Farm with refreshments and student presentations.

8. Set Date /Venue for Fall 2025 Meeting

Tuesday, April 28th at Dutton Ranch Gail Ann's Vineyard meeting room, at 3:00pm.

Meeting adjourns at 4:06pm -With a walkabout in the Shone Farm Vineyard.