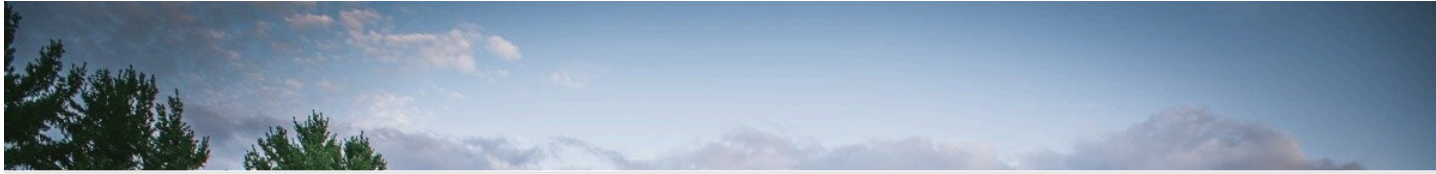




Suttons Bay winery wins research grant to test new sustainable soft pesticides at vineyard

MJ GALBRAITH | THURSDAY, APRIL 18, 2024





What's happening: Shady Lane Cellars is reserving 10 acres of its Suttons Bay vineyard to conduct trials of new sustainable soft pesticides, with testing beginning this month. The estate winery and vineyard was recently awarded an \$11,000 farming grant from USDA's National Institute for Food and Agriculture to conduct the trials.

Why it's happening: "A primary objective is to reduce the impacts of pesticides in the vineyard ecosystem, the surrounding environment and on the vineyard workers," reads the grant application. "Another objective is to investigate more effective products for bunch rots, thus allowing for greater yield and increased quality parameters. We are also seeking to grow grapes with less chemical residues at time of harvest."

What's planned: Andy Fles, vineyard and facilities manager for Shady Lane, will lead the study, testing the sustainable soft pesticides on a little more than three acres of each Riesling, Pinot Noir, and Vignole varieties. Fles will be determining the efficacy of pesticides made from naturally-derived products as he looks for more sustainable ways to manage powdery mildew and Botrytis bunch rot, common diseases for grapes both here in the region and beyond.

How it's happening: The research project was just one of 40 to receive a Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) grant from the



USDA's National Institute for Food and Agriculture, with more than 140 applicants vying for the grants. Fles is collaborating with plant pathology researcher Dr. Tim Miles and entomology researcher Dr. Rufus Isaacs of Michigan State University, and Winegrape Educator Esmaeil Nasrollahiazar of MSU Extension, on the project.

Vineyard and Facilities Manager Andy Fles is leading a study to further enhance the sustainability practices at Suttons Bay's Shady Lane Cellars. He earned an \$11,000 national SARE grant to do so.
(Photo/Caption: Shady Lane Cellars)

Why it's important: "With the SARE funds coming to Michigan, it will help the grape industry see first-hand how new approaches can help meet grower and winemaker needs in our climate," says Dr. Isaacs. "The project will help support the continued close collaboration between MSU Grape Team and Shady Lane. Vineyard Manager Andy Fles has been an accommodating host for many research projects, providing critical guidance to our team, as well as access to vineyards. Andy asks a lot of questions, helps us get the projects completed, and keeps our research grounded in the needs of growers and winemakers. We're excited to see what comes from this project!"

Shady Lane Cellars is located at 9580 E. Shady Ln. in Suttons Bay.

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