



Cornell Cooperative Extension

Ulster County

Verjuice in the Hudson Valley



What is Verjuice?

- Sour grape juice!
- Pressing of unripe grapes
- Highly acidic
- Non alcoholic
- Popular in medieval times



Grower Background

- Immigrant from Persia
- Purchased land Stormville 2011
- New to farming
- Table grape grower
- Alistone Vineyard



Ali Yaghoubi packing table grapes in his vineyard

Why Verjuice

- 49 wineries, 235 Acres Hudson Valley
- Table grapes – fresh market
- Surplus grapes
- Recipe from home (Persia)
- New markets



Uses for Verjuice



- Culinary creations
- Soups/stews
- Vinaigrettes/salad dressings
- Plays well with wine
- Drinks (on its own/mixed alcohol)

Verjuice in NYS?

- To an extent
- Greater availability Canada, France
- Made from unripe wine grapes
- Sulfites used
- Difference in taste?



Red Newt Cellars winery on Seneca Lake

Image source: <https://www.newyorkupstate.com/expo/erry-2018/05/2f2bbdf2824957/index.html>



WÖLFFER Estate Long Island

Image source: <https://store.wolffer.com/product/Verjus>

Objectives



Farmer Grant

For commercial farmers who want to test a new idea using a field trial, on-farm demonstration, marketing initiative, or other technique.

- Dedicate 1/8th vineyard to project
- Standard practices up to harvest
- Costs: Verjuice vs Table grapes
- Yields: Verjuice vs Table grapes
- Sales/Profit: Verjuice vs Table grapes

Results



- Success!
- Harvest – July 28 – August 4 2018
- 2 passes de-stemmer/crusher
- Pressed in manual basket press
- Bottled, no sulfites
- 60 days rest, then racked
- Yields: 0.25 tons grapes, 36 gallons juice

Costs

Table Grape Production Costs

Job	Total cost (\$ 1/8A)
Pruning	38
Shoot thinning	30
Summer pruning	120
Harvest	165
Pesticide materials	45
Pesticide labor	90
Boxes + packaging	28
Labels	9
Delivery	33
Mileage	48
Call markets	0.5
Total	607

Verjuice Production Costs

Job	Total Cost (\$ 1/8A)
Pruning	38
Shoot thinning	30
Summer hedging	15
Harvest/press/bottle	23
Pesticide materials	44
Pesticide labor	60
Bottles	90
Labels	9
Delivery	8
Mileage	14
Call markets	0.5
Total	331

Discussion

- Table grapes high input crop
- Especially near harvest
- Verjuice lower input
- Good profit potential



Running the Numbers

- 2017 data (“normal year”)
 - \$607 to produce 1/8 table grapes
 - \$700 sales, net profit \$93.00
- 2018 WET!! (data excluded)
 - \$332 to produce 1/8 verjuice
 - Estimated sales \$351 - \$1053
 - Estimated net profit \$20 - \$722
- No verjuice sales – using estimates

Chef Survey

- Would you use verjuice?



- 50% may cook with it regularly
- 20% yes in catered events
- 10% yes personalized meal plans
- 80% at least once in a recipe of their choice

Barriers to Using Verjuice

- Somewhat unknown product
- Unsure how to use it
- Different, making a change
- Too unfamiliar to general public



https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/1/18/Emoji_u1f6a7.svg/1024px-Emoji_u1f6a7.svg.png

Overcoming Obstacles

- Work within a familiar market
- Test samples new markets
- Feedback/development
- Expand into unknown



<https://www.mariowiki.com/File:410mhurtles.PNG>

The Future?

- Cornell Food Venture Lab
- Samples, methodology
- Old world vs new world practices
- Marketing, promotion
 - New innovations
 - Create something unique
 - Stand out from all the rest



Image source: <https://www.deviantart.com/dominussingulae/art/The-Long-Road-Ahead-383450202>

Questions?



Thank You!

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