CFAES

OHIO AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT CENTER

ASHTABULA AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH STATION

HISTORY

The newest among OARDC's outlying research sites, the Ashtabula Agricultural Research Station was established in 1985, a year after the Ohio legislature appropriated funds for OARDC to set up a grape research farm. The Ashtabula County Commissioners then entered into a long-term lease agreement with The Ohio State University for 25 acres of the former county home farmland. Over the years, OARDC has built trellised vineyards, two operations buildings, a cold storage facility, and an automated weather station on the site.

Andrew Kirk,
Research Specialist
Ashtabula Agricultural Research Station
2625 S. Ridge Road E.
P.O. Box 467
Kingsville, OH 44048

440-224-0273
kirk.197@osu.edu
go.osu.edu/Ashtabula

DRIVING OHIO'S GRAPE AND WINE INDUSTRIES FORWARD

Located in the heart of Ohio's major grape-growing region, just three miles south of the Lake Erie shore, the 25-acre Ashtabula Agricultural Research Station is dedicated to serving the research and outreach needs of the state's rapidly expanding grape and wine industries.

Ashtabula Station personnel work with Ohio Agricultural Research and Development Center (OARDC) scientists, Ohio State University Extension specialists, growers, wineries, and industry groups to conduct innovative research and test management practices aimed at improving the production efficiency of grapes destined for the juice and wine industries. Because of its proximity to area vineyards and the fact that it faces similar growing and weather conditions, the station is an ideal outdoor laboratory to help growers find solutions to their problems, improve their operations, and boost the contributions of the grape-wine sector to Ohio's economy.

Today, the Ohio grape and wine industries have a total economic impact of more than a half-billion dollars a year.

RESEARCH FOCUS

The Ashtabula Agricultural Research Station maintains a comprehensive research program that covers the entire spectrum of grape and wine production, including work on cultivar evaluation and management practices; pest, disease, and weed control; cold tolerance; and evaluation of juice and wine quality. The coordinated work of Ohio State viticulturists, enologists, plant pathologists, entomologists, and weed ecologists has been crucial to the station's success in meeting growers' needs and ensuring the viability of the state's grape and wine industries.

In northeastern Ohio alone, the industries boast 1,300 acres of grapes, 70 wineries, $15 million in economic output, and $35.47 million in income for northeastern Ohioans.

KEY RESEARCH STUDIES CONDUCTED AT THE STATION INCLUDE:

DISEASE MANAGEMENT

The climate of northeastern Ohio is conducive to numerous grape diseases. Studies at the station focus on the evaluation of new chemicals and control methods for many of these diseases.

INSECT MANAGEMENT

Native and introduced insects are a perennial concern of area growers. OARDC scientists are quick to respond to grower needs with studies at the Ashtabula Station. Additionally, the station plays a vital role in the establishment of insect thresholds, control methods, food safety and quality, and dissemination of information.

WEED MANAGEMENT

Innovative approaches to weed control are an ongoing focus at the station. Herbicide-treated mulches, herbicide rates, drift, and problem weed identification help growers establish management practices that lead to prudent use of resources.

NEW CULTIVAR TRIALS AND QUALITY MANAGEMENT

The station evaluates new cultivars to assist growers in identifying grape varieties suited to the climate of northeastern Ohio. Boosting grape quality is also a state and national priority supported at the station. OARDC viticulture research has focused on identifying the most sustainable production practices that improve vine health as well as fruit and wine quality.

COLD TOLERANCE

Freezing temperatures in midwinter and late spring are the most limiting factors for commercial grape production in Ohio. OARDC experts focus their research on studying physiological, biochemical, and molecular mechanisms by which grapevines cope with freezing temperatures and subsequently on developing protection methods.

WINE QUALITY

Enologists at the Wooster campus play a major role in many studies conducted at the station. Wines produced from varietal and cultural trials help in determining the qualitative outcome of many studies. In addition, many station-grown grapes are used in research and Extension projects that help area wineries.

OUTREACH

The station has a very close relationship with local growers and winery owners who provide critical input in the planning and development of many research projects. The station's advisory committee brings together producers, OARDC researchers, and OSU Extension personnel, who keep research activities on target with the industry's needs. The station also hosts various outreach events—including the biennial Ohio Grape and Wine Field Day, the Winter Pruning School, and educational programs for students from kindergarten through college.

ECONOMIC IMPACT

Research and outreach conducted at the Ashtabula Agricultural Research Station impact the northeastern Ohio economy and the entire Buckeye state.

- Ohio is now one of the top wine producers in the country, boasting 2,000 acres of grapes, annual production of more than 1.2 million gallons, and over 240 licensed wine manufacturers—growing from only 37 in the mid-1990s.
- Today, the Ohio grape and wine industry has a total economic impact of more than a half-billion dollars a year.
- In northeastern Ohio alone, the industry boasts 1,300 acres of grapes, 70 wineries, $15 million in economic output, and $35.47 million in income for northeastern Ohioans.