

New Zealand Wine Industry Committed to World Class Sustainability Programme

- *Sustainability Policy targets the whole industry operating sustainably in 5 years.*
- *Policy builds on more than a decade's experience.*
- *Sustainability is seen as the 'Passport to Trade'.*

New Zealand Winegrowers has issued a draft Sustainability Policy position to grape growers and winemakers that targets having all New Zealand grapes and wine produced under independently audited sustainability schemes by vintage 2012.

Commenting on the draft proposal Winegrowers' CEO Philip Gregan said "We believe that sustainability is a key long term strategic issue for on-going success of our industry. Our view is that if growers and wineries cannot prove they are producing and marketing wine sustainably then ultimately there will be no place for them in the international market. In short, sustainability is the passport to trade."

Mr Gregan said he believed the industry was well positioned to meet the sustainability target. "We already have over a decade's in-depth experience with sustainability issues. We have built Sustainable Winegrowing New Zealand (SWNZ) up over the past 13 years to the point where over 60% of the total vineyard area is managed under SWNZ rules while wineries in the programme account for around 70% of wine production. In addition we have funded a wide range of research into sustainable production methods, and were a key player in the development of the Biogro organic grape and wine standard."

The draft policy position follows an international review of Sustainable Winegrowing New Zealand. The Review examined sustainability in general and also looked at the performance of the SWNZ scheme. The Review confirmed the importance of sustainability issues, and areas of strengths and weaknesses in the SWNZ programme.

“The Review consulted widely in the industry on the best way to move forward into the future. As a result we believe now is the time to take the industry to a new level of commitment to sustainability.”

“The proposed 2012 target is just one part of the integrated response to the Review. There are a number of other key milestones such as from vintage 2010 requiring audited participation in a sustainability scheme if wines are to participate in New Zealand Winegrowers global marketing programme. We are also committed to on-going restructuring of the SWNZ scheme to ensure it continues to be a world class leader in the sustainability field.”

Wineries and growers are being asked to comment on the proposal by mid-April. New Zealand Winegrowers is planning to implement the confirmed Policy position for the commencement of the new financial year on 1 July 2007.

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