



## Providing United States Winegrape Growers a Voice

### Newsletter

#### **2022 Rich Smith Award of Excellence Presented to Tom Davenport**

The sixth annual Rich Smith Award of Excellence for outstanding contributions to the American grape and wine industry was presented to Thomas (Tom) Davenport, a retired executive from National Grape Cooperative who has been a leader in fostering and coordinating research on state and national levels.

After Rich passed away in December 2015, three organizations—the National Grape Research Alliance (NGRA), WineAmerica, and Winegrape Growers of America (WGA)—collaborated with Rich's family to create this annual award.

"We are pleased to present this award to Tom Davenport, a close colleague for many years starting with NGRA's formation," said Rich's son Jason Smith on behalf of Rich's wife Claudia and daughter Kacy. "Not only did the two friends share a passion for research, but they also shared the innate spirit of collaboration which makes things happen."



[Click here to read more about Tom and the Rich Smith Award of Excellence >>](#)

#### **Farm Bill Planning Process**

Every five years, Congress passes legislation known as the "Farm Bill" to set national policy for agriculture, nutrition, conservation, and forestry. The Agricultural Improvement Act of 2018 (2018 Farm Bill) was the last Farm Bill. The House Agriculture Committee has begun hearings in preparation for the 2023 Farm Bill. On March 8, 2022, the Committee conducted a hearing on rural development. A hearing on the role of USDA programs in addressing climate change took place on March 16. Stay tuned to learn more details about the 2023 Farm Bill, as seven of the twelve titles in the bill affect the US winegrape industry.

#### **Fiscal Year 2022 Omnibus Appropriations Bill**

On March 10, 2022, Congress passed a \$1.5 trillion omnibus appropriations bill that will fund the federal government for the remainder of fiscal year 2022, which began on October 1, 2021.



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The omnibus bill provides increases in funding for small fruits research and wildfire smoke research, and \$1,000,000 for control and eradication of the spotted lanternfly. The bill also contains language prohibiting the Food and Drug Administration from enforcing Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) standards for growing, harvesting, packing or holding winegrapes, hops, pulse crops or almonds. Funding is also provided for a collaborative research program on precision viticulture for winegrapes and to support existing viticulture and enology research programs.

The omnibus bill also includes \$5 million for the Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau for COLA review that will remain available until September 30, 2023 so that this critical function will continue in the event of a government shutdown. It also includes \$5 million to accelerate COLA processing and funding for the Department of the Treasury to study the impacts of increased wildfire risk on insurance markets and to make recommendations to ensure that insurance coverage for losses related to wildfires remains affordable.

### **Plan for Fiscal Year 2023**

The President's budget proposal for fiscal year 2023, which begins on October 1, 2022, was released on Monday, March 28, 2022. The budget proposal for the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) includes \$1.9 billion for research projects of the Agricultural Research Service, \$1.105 billion for agricultural pest and disease programs, \$9.8 billion for the Federal Crop insurance program, and \$2.1 billion for mitigating wildfire risk.

The President's budget is the administration's recommendation for funding the federal government for the upcoming year. Its release marks the beginning of the appropriations process for fiscal year 2023. The next step in this process is for the Congressional Appropriations Subcommittees to develop draft versions of each of the 12 appropriations bills—there is a subcommittee for each bill.

WGA continues to advocate for additional funding in the fiscal year 2023 Agriculture Appropriations Act for research on wildfire smoke effects on winegrapes and for maintaining a prohibition on the Food and Drug Administration from enforcing FSMA standards for growing, harvesting, packing or holding winegrapes.

On March 30, 2022, the Senate Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship held a hearing on S. 2675, Continuing Emergency Support for Restaurants, which would provide an additional funding for the Restaurant Revitalization Fund.

The House Agriculture Committee has begun hearings in preparation for the 2023 Farm Bill. Hearings were conducted on March 29 for Horticulture and Urban Agriculture, on March 30 for SNAP, and on March 31 for the State of the Commodity Futures Trading Commission. Hearings are scheduled on April 5 on Energy-Renewable Energy Opportunities in Rural America and on April 6 for International Trade and Food Assistance Programs.



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## WGA Represents Industry in Washington, DC

Winegrape industry leaders joined together in Washington, DC this week to meet with their respective state delegations and with U.S. Department of Agriculture officials. Delegates also met with other agricultural groups to discuss key issues including smoke research funding, comprehensive immigration reform, the 2023 Farm Bill, increased research funding on mechanization and automation, and improvements to the federal crop insurance program.

WGA is advocating for \$5 million in annual funding for research to address and support improved methodologies for sampling and testing of smoke-exposed grapes, a comprehensive database of background levels of smoke-taint compounds occurring naturally in winegrapes, and mitigation measures to remedy smoke-taint. Current funding provided \$4.5 million in wildfire smoke research monies for the USDA's Agricultural Research Service.



Changes to federal crop insurance for winegrape growers was also addressed, seeking improvements to the current program rather than establishing a new permanent disaster assistance program. Disaster assistance programs struggle to make timely payments creating an unsustainable option for affected growers suffering devastating loss. Delegate growers voiced support for the opportunity to selectively buy-up coverage under crop insurance to protect against wildfire risks.

## Reminder to Renew Your Membership for 2022-2023

From a relentless pandemic to wildfire disaster to federal funding and regulatory issues, what a year we endured and continue to endure. The silver lining? Our renewed enthusiasm coupled with your support allowed us to disseminate information, virtually network, lobby, and amplify our unified voice of U.S. winegrape growers to be heard loudly on the issues that matter to you!

**We must continue to represent the interests of growers impacted by public policies that affect their bottom line. Please join us and renew your WGA annual membership.**

The growth in membership the past year has been encouraging and our goal is to get every state with a grower



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related organization as a member! And, thanks to a generous donation from Farm Credit, funds are available for those needing financial assistance for dues (one per state)!

Learn more about membership benefits at: [www.winegrapegrowersofamerica.org](http://www.winegrapegrowersofamerica.org). Invoices and reminders have been sent out. If you are interested in renewing your membership, please contact us and we can send you an invoice. If you have questions, contact us at 509.782.8234 or email [vicky@wawinegrowers.org](mailto:vicky@wawinegrowers.org).