

A stylized, colorful illustration of a landscape. The foreground features rolling green hills with a brown path. On the left, there is a green tree, a purple flower, and an orange flower. A red bird is flying in the sky. The background consists of layered blue and white waves, suggesting a sky or water. The overall style is flat and modern.

# Table grapes for eastern Canada

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# Ontario Fresh Grape Industry

- *Very small proportion of the total vineyard production*
- *Very limited choice of varieties for commercial shipping sales*
- *Many varieties available for local consumption through small fruit markets and local restaurants, but they are often quite winter tender and unknown to the consumer*
- *Producer may also have to be the retailer to promote sales*
- *Production differs from wine grape production but returns are comparable*
- *Reliable labour availability is critical at harvest*

# Proportion of Main Ontario Industry (tonnes)

Variety type	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
<b>Fresh Sales</b>	<b>2,037</b>	<b>1,510</b>	<b>1,996</b>	<b>1,937</b>	<b>1,939</b>
Labrusca	2,467	1,575	2,720	2,164	1,862
White Hybrid	16,810	15,127	19,559	14,803	16,475
Red Hybrid	5,163	5,033	7,099	4,857	6,193
Total hybrid	21,973	20,160	26,658	19,660	22,668
White vinifera	21,031	21,209	25,552	18,815	16,984
Red Vinifera	19,024	20,070	22,618	12,079	11,738
Vinifera Total	40,055	44,279	51,170	30,892	28,722
Processed total	64,495	66,014	80,548	52,716	53,252

GGO, AnnRpt, 2016  
 OFGGMB, AnnRpt 2016

# Relative Farm returns (\$/tonne)

Variety	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
<b>Fresh</b>	<b>1445</b>	<b>1584</b>	<b>1606</b>	<b>1716</b>	<b>1696</b>
Labrusca	-	-	-	503	508
White Hybrid	-	-	-	546	552
Red Hybrid	-	-	-	720	655
White vinifera	-	-	-	1468	1482
Red vinifera	-	-	-	1763	1763

GGO, AnnRpt, 2016  
 OFGGMB, AnnRpt 2016

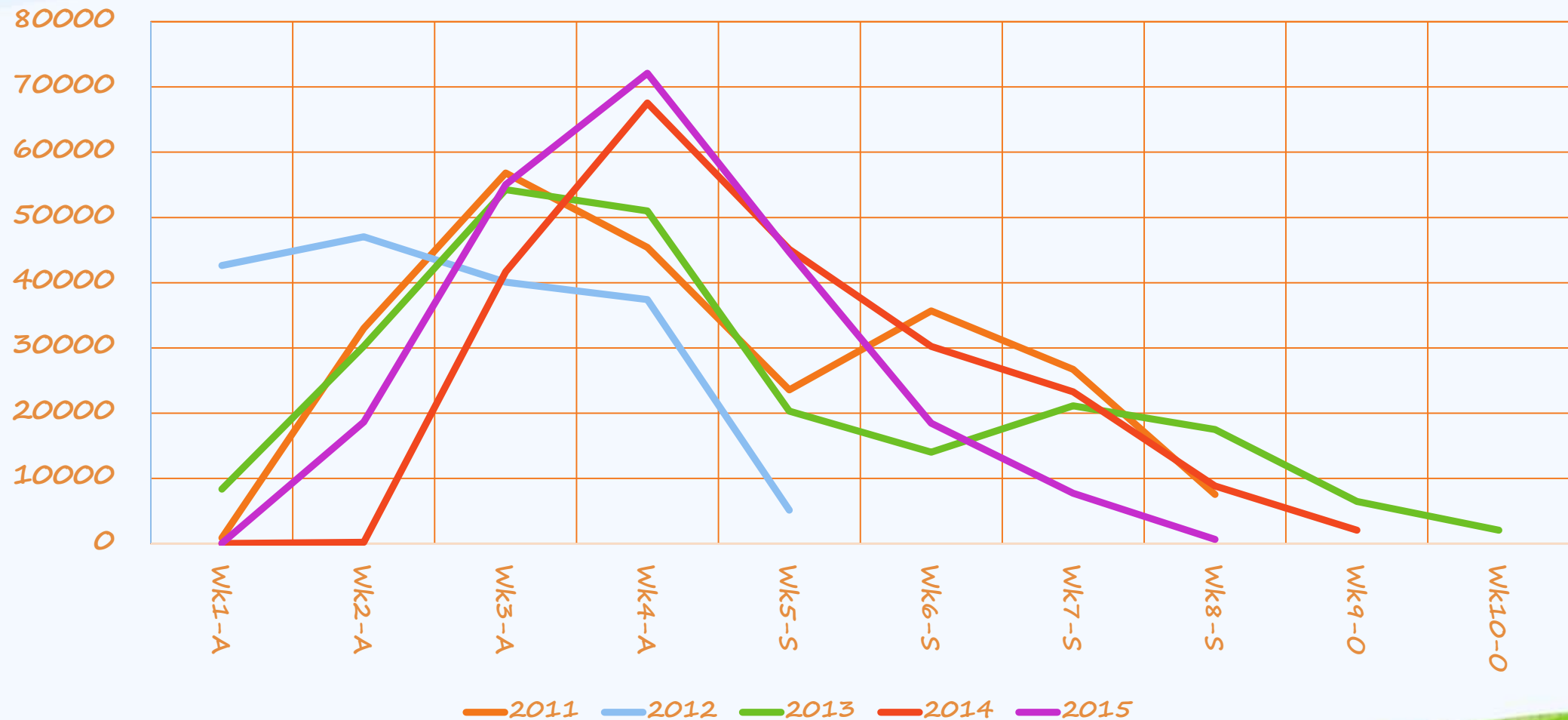
# Variety Distribution (by acres)

Variety	NOTL	OTHER	Total
Fredonia (L)	0	35.41	35.41
Himrod (VLH)	2.07	0.10	2.17
Patricia (L)	0	2.87	2.87
Sovereign (LVH)	255.62	39.52	295.14
Van Buren (L)	0.6	0.96	1.02
Experimental (VLH)	1.48	0	1.48

L = labrusca, V = vinifera, H = hybrid

OFGGMB, AnnRpt 2015

# Ontario Fresh Grape Production Season (8 kg units)



# Fresh Grape Production – preparation

- *What are the differences from wine grapes ?*
  - *Varieties, climate suitability*
  - *Trellising, pruning*
  - *Yield, canopy management*
  - *Nutrition, irrigation*
  - *Harvesting, packaging, quality control*
  - *Labour demand, cost of production*
  - *Finding the right consumers and market opportunities*

*Varieties and their  
suitability*





# Varieties

- *Must ripen in the growing season (<1200 GGD @ 10C)*
- *Winter tolerance - -25C to -30C (or burying is necessary)*
- *Late bud break but early harvest*
- *Early ripening is better - mid August*
- *High percentage of usable clusters*
- *Even ripening for one harvest time*
- *Consistent yield*





*Sovereign Coronation*



*Canadice*



*Himrod*



*Vanessa*

## *Potential Commercial Varieties*



# *Pruning and Yield*

# Pruning and Yield

- *Spur or cane pruning dependent on trellis design, hardiness*
- *Cane pruning best for hardy varieties (labrusca), depending on bud survival*
- *Basal buds not always fruitful (labrusca)*
- *Very severe pruning (or winter injury) will encourage excess vegetation*
- *Labrusca not very fruitful after late spring frost damage*

# Pruning and Yield

- *Need to balance pruning with potential yield*
- *Reduced yield will encourage more rapid ripening*
- *BUT: Very low yield will encourage vegetation and delay ripening*
  - *Vine unbalanced (<1 cluster per 2 shoots)*
  - *Excess vegetative growth, more shading, cooler fruit, poor colour*
- *Buried canes will always have <80% budbreak*
  - *Vines not fully dormant when pruning prior to burying*
  - *Vines may already be active before unburying in spring*
  - *Anaerobic conditions/soil fungi attack buds*

# Trellising and Canopy Management



# Trellising and Canopy management

- *Need a trellis design that accommodates:*
  - *Variety growth pattern – pendulous or upright*
  - *Winter protection if necessary – low crown, low canes, short trunks*
  - *Fruit exposure (placement, trimming) to minimize entanglement*
  - *Fruit exposure (leafing) to maximize sun exposure*
  - *Harvesting by hand*
    - *Row spacing to allow for trailers/containers/workers*
    - *Moderate height for ease of picking*
    - *Not too low to keep fruit clean (rain splash, raccoons)*
    - *Netting for animal and bird protection*

*Non shoot positioned trellis  
Pendulous variety  
Sovereign Coronation*



*Clusters  
hanging  
free, well  
exposed*



*Tangled clusters, must  
search to pick the best*



*Room for equipment and people*



*Small moveable frame  
for bulk picking*



*Large wagon for finished field pack*

# Picking aids for hand harvesting

Small movable platform



Various frames for holding clamshells, baskets or masters



## *Additional Protection*

### *Nets*



### *Paper falcons*



*Nutrition  
(and Irrigation?)*



# Nutrition (and Irrigation?)

- *Good balanced nutrition critical for fruit quality, like wine grapes*
- *Sod to reduce nitrogen, reduce vigour (cool, wet, high OM soils)*
- *Boron (maybe K, P) content may be critical in low pH soils*
  - *Boron necessary for good phloem loading and movement of sugars*
  - *Critical at bloom and post bloom for set and shoot/leaf growth*
- *Tissue samples recommended at bloom and veraison to compare uptake to soil mineral availability*
- *Fresh grapes should never be dry between bloom and harvest to maximize berry size and cluster fullness (unnecessary in QC?)*

# Harvesting, Packaging and Quality Control



# Harvesting, Packaging and Quality Control

- Harvest should maximize sugar/acid balance
- Fruit should be uniformly ripe, sweet and without blemishes
- Fruit should be cooled directly after harvest for best storage
- Most eastern varieties should be field packed as they don't tolerate much handling (loose berries, wet scars at stem end)
- Central pack for firmer varieties in small containers (0.5, 1, 1.5 L), convenient for stacking and good fruit display
- Covered packages for commercial retail sales (clamshells)

# Re-packing from bulk pack from storage

*Bulk baskets*



*Field Pack*



*Retail Pack*





## Direct Field Packing for commercial shipping



Careful placement  
In 1.5 L baskets  
pre-packed in  
shipping  
masters



Consolidated load ready for cold storage

# Unacceptable cluster quality



Uneven coloration



Dried Cluster tip



Blemishes  
Missing berries



# *Labour Demand and Cost of Production*



# Labour Demand and Cost of Production

- Need a reliable supply of hand labour for harvest and occasional labour for canopy management during summer
- Farm returns/tonne similar to wine grapes and labour demand may be similar to hand harvested wine grapes
- Canopy management labour costs (thinning, leafing, trimming, placement) for some varieties could be similar to premium wine grapes (multiple thinning, leafing)
- Container costs, perishable crop requiring CLEAN container storage, packing areas and refrigeration, unlike wine grapes

A stylized, colorful landscape illustration. In the foreground, a green hill features a purple flower with a brown stem and small leaves. The background consists of rolling hills in shades of blue and white. The text "Market Opportunities" is written in a brown, cursive font on the right side of the image.

# *Market Opportunities*

# Market Opportunities

- Fresh fruit sales could be direct from the farm or through other retail outlets and restaurants
- Premium grocers specializing in local produce
- Packaged fresh fruit in unique containers
- Raisins from culled fruit
- Loose, frozen grapes for unique desserts (local restaurants)
- “Dolma” from grape leaves or Christmas wreaths from grape canes if your crop fails!

Thank you  
Merci

