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Acreage Living is published monthly. Please share it with your acreage neighbors. Call your local ISU Extension Office for more information or contact an ISU Extension staff member listed below to suggest topics for future articles.

Editors:
Paul Brown
Assistant Director
Ag & Natural Resources
Extension
pwbrown@iastate.edu
(515) 294-7801

Shawn Shouse
Extension Field Specialist
sshouse@iastate.edu
(712) 769-2600

Designer:
Paulette Cambridge
paulette@iastate.edu
(712) 769-2600

Can I Grow Grapes? (Part 2)

*By Paul Domoto, ISU Professor & Extension Fruit Specialist,
Department of Horticulture*

Once you have determined your site is suitable for a vineyard (*See June 2008 issue*), it is time to determine if owning and operating a vineyard is feasible and fits your life-style. Factors to be considered include available markets, establishment and production costs, and labor.

Markets: The primary expansion of Iowa's grape industry has been in cultivars (cultivated varieties) suited for wine. There are a couple of juice processors in Iowa and some cultivars grown for wine are suitable for their needs. Fresh market table types can be grown and marketed through grocery stores, farmers' markets, or on-farm retail outlets, but this is generally a more limited market.

Before starting a vineyard, develop a marketing plan to aid in determining what cultivars to plant. If you plan to grow grapes for wine, it is important to visit local wineries to determine if they are interested in obtaining more grapes, what cultivars they want, what they are willing to pay for locally grown grapes, and if they would consider negotiating a contract for high quality fruit that meets their needs. There are many grape cultivars that can be grown in Iowa, but most wineries have limited fermentation space so they concentrate on making wine from a limited number of cultivars and/or styles of wine. It is important to know the cultivar needs of potential buyers.

In discussing cultivars with a winery, it is important to keep in mind how well adapted the cultivars are to your area and whether they have any special cultural requirements or problems. To provide information on the adaptability and production potential of various grape cultivars, trials are being conducted at four strategically located ISU research farms and

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annual progress reports are posted on the [ISU Viticulture](#) [1] Home Page and [ISU Research & Demonstration Farms](#) [2]. Web site.

Other alternatives for marketing wine grapes are to join a cooperative or establish your own winery. Iowa currently has one [cooperative winery](#) [3].

If you are considering starting your own winery, you will need to obtain state and federal licenses. The [State of Iowa Alcoholic Beverages Division](#) [4] is the information source for licensing requirements for a winery. Murli Dharmadhikari murli@iastate.edu is the ISU Extension enologist and director of the [Midwest Grape & Wine Institute](#) [5] and can help you learn to make wine.



Establishment Costs:

Depending upon the cost of the vines, vine spacing, trellis design, and length of the rows, costs can range from about \$5,000 to as much as \$10,000 per acre to establish a vineyard if you already own the land. This does not include the cost of a small tractor, a sprayer for applying herbicides, another sprayer for applying

fungicides and insecticides, and other specialized equipment.

To help potential growers determine if they can afford to establish a vineyard, three downloadable, interactive workbooks have been established for the common trellis systems used in the Midwest (high trellis, Geneva double curtain, mid-wire cordon with vertical shoot position). They are available on the [Ag Marketing Resource Center](#) [6] Web site at . The workbooks allow you to customize the spreadsheets to meet your own conditions and production expectations. Keep in mind that if productivity is too high, fruit quality parameters for wine will decline. The workbooks project out to 13 years and show when you can expect to recover your investment.

Labor: Operating a vineyard requires a lot of hand labor for pruning, tying canes to the trellis, suckering, shoot thinning, shoot positioning for optimizing exposure to sunlight, cluster thinning to regulate the crop on some cultivars, and harvesting. The vineyard establishment workbooks provide estimated hourly requirements to perform these tasks in chronological order during the season.

Important questions that need to be answered before planting a



vineyard include: Am I going to do all the labor myself? If so, how much time per week can I devote to the vineyard? How many acres can I manage? Are there times I will need additional help? If so, when are they and how much additional help will I need? Is there an adequate source of labor available? How much time will I need to devote to employee training and supervision? How much will I need to pay to attract and retain a reliable work force?

Because vineyards are expensive to establish, it is critical your site and soil conditions are suitable for grapes, the cultivars selected are adapted to your conditions, adequate labor is available to carry out the various cultural practices in a timely manner, and you have a market for your grapes. If you try to skimp on any one of these requirements, chances for success can be greatly reduced. Hopefully this information will steer you in the right direction in determining if grapes are for you.

[1] <http://viticulture.hort.iastate.edu/home.html>

[2] <http://www.ag.iastate.edu/farms/>

[3] <http://www.shwinery.com/default.aspx>

[4] <http://www.iowaabd.com/>

[5] <http://www.extension.iastate.edu/Wine/>

[6] http://www.agmrc.org/commodities_products/fruits/wine/winery_and_vineyard_feasibility_workbooks.cfm

ENERGY STAR – Guide to Efficiency and Sustainability

By Shawn Shouse, ISU Extension Ag Engineering Field Specialist

ENERGY STAR is a joint program of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Department of Energy that helps consumers save money and protect the environment through promotion of energy efficient products and practices.



In 1992 the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) introduced Energy Star as a voluntary labeling program designed to identify and promote energy-efficient products to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Computers and monitors were the first labeled products. Through 1995, EPA expanded the label to additional office equipment products and residential heating and cooling equipment. In 1996, EPA partnered with the U.S. Department of Energy for particular product categories. The Energy Star label is now on major appliances, office equipment, lighting, home electronics, and more. EPA has also extended the label to cover new homes and commercial and industrial buildings.

Through its partnerships with more than 12,000 private and public sector organizations, Energy Star delivers the technical information and tools that organizations and consumers need to choose energy-efficient solutions and best management practices.

Energy Star has successfully delivered energy and cost savings across the country, saving businesses, organizations, and consumers about \$16 billion in 2007 alone. Over the past decade, Energy Star has been a driving force behind the more widespread use of such technological innovations as efficient fluorescent lighting, power management systems for office equipment, and low standby energy use.



Energy Star provides a trustworthy label on more than 50 product categories (and thousands of models) for the home and office. These products deliver the same or better performance as comparable



models while using less energy and saving money. Products include appliances such as dishwashers and refrigerators, heating and cooling equipment such as furnaces and heat pumps, home envelope products including windows and insulation, home electronics such as power adapters and televisions, office equipment including computers and copiers, and lighting devices including light fixtures and bulbs.

Energy Star also provides easy-to-use home and building assessment tools so homeowners and building managers can start down the path to greater efficiency and cost savings. Energy Star rated homes are at least 15 percent more energy efficient than homes built to the 2004 International Residential Code (IRC), and include additional energy-saving features that typically make them 20–30 percent more efficient than standard homes.

Learn more and access Energy Star services. Information for this article was excerpted from [Energy Star](#) [1] web pages courtesy of U.S. EPA.

[1] <http://www.energystar.gov>



Knowing Where the Money Goes Will Help Money Go Further

By Margaret Van Ginkel, ISU Extension Family Resource Management Field Specialist

Record prices at the gas pump and rising grocery prices are forcing families to reevaluate their spending habits and look for ways to meet their needs. Families are beginning to combine trips, find alternate transportation and look for ways to cut down on driving in answer to high gas prices.

With more money going to buy food and gas, families are asking what they can do to make ends meet. Experts recommend that families start by tracking their spending. They will see obvious places where they can cut back or places where they are spending more than they need to.

Since the cost of living rose during the past 12 months at the fastest pace since 1991 and incomes did not keep up, knowing where dollars are actually going will help families manage their money. Families should keep a close tab on where the money goes and manage daily financial responsibilities.

Iowa State University Extension publications, Money Mechanics - Record Keeping, PM 1452a and Spending Plans, PM 1454a, offer information and simple

worksheets to guide families in tracking and managing spending. The publications are available at your local ISU Extension office and can be downloaded free or ordered from the [Extension Online Store](#) [1].

Work to identify areas of waste or items you don't need or use. Open the refrigerator door – are there foods in there that have gone to waste or food that should be used right away? When cooking, think about portion sizes and fixing only what will get eaten as a way to cut grocery expenses.

Look around the house – are there items that could be sold at a garage sale to generate extra cash? Is there an old car in the yard that doesn't get driven much that could be sold, then taken off the insurance policy – saving money a couple of ways?

As temperatures get colder and heating costs get higher, think about ways to be more energy efficient. Turn off lights when you leave the room, unplug appliances when they aren't in use, close off and don't heat rooms that are not used. ISU Extension posts [energy tips](#) [2].

As the holiday season approaches, be open and honest with family members about finances. When it comes to gift giving, be honest about tight finances – everyone is sharing in this difficult time, so find creative ways to give without spending money you don't have. Make gifts or give a certificate of time or talent – or cut out gifts altogether. If you feel you must give gifts, put a price limit on gifts and stick to it. When you know what you want to buy, watch for the item to go on sale before purchasing.

More holiday shopping tips can be found in the [Money for Life](#) [3] archive.



Additional financial information is available at your local ISU Extension office and [online](#) [4].

[1] <https://www.extension.iastate.edu/store/>

[2] <http://www.extension.iastate.edu/admin/info/energytips.htm>

[3] http://www.extension.iastate.edu/finances/personal/mfl_archive.htm

[4] <http://www.extension.iastate.edu/finances>