



Lodi Rules - A Brief History

In April of 2001, after having used the *Lodi Winegrower's Workbook* for a year and a half, a committee of Lodi Winegrape Commission (LWC) growers convened to explore the idea of adding value to Lodi winegrapes and wine through a marketing program using an environmental message. They reviewed programs with similar goals both in the United States and overseas and came to three conclusions:

1. Developing a set of sustainable farming standards certified by a third party provides the most credibility for a program.
2. The sustainable farming standards should be based on the *Lodi Winegrower's Workbook* because it was the most comprehensive sustainable winegrowing document.
3. The best third party certification model was Protected Harvest's which was developed to certify the Healthy Grown® program for Wisconsin fresh market potatoes.

The Protected Harvest certification model requires a grower to achieve two goals for their fields to become certified; 1) exceed a minimum number of sustainable farming practices points, and 2) not exceed a maximum number of environmental impact units associated with the pesticides used on each specific field. The committee contacted Protected Harvest expressing interest in having them accredit and certify a sustainable program for winegrapes. It was agreed a committee would be formed to draft a set of farming practice standards they felt were rigorous and submit them to the Protected Harvest Board for peer review, Board review and accreditation.

Over a fourteen month period, beginning in 2003, a committee of growers, vineyard consultants, University of California Farm Advisors and Scientists, vintners and a wildlife biologist reviewed all of the issues in the *Lodi Winegrower's Workbook* and drafted 75 farming practice standards. Consistent with the theme of holistic farm management these practices addressed issues in the following chapters: Ecosystem Management; Education, Training and Team Building; Soil Management, Water Management, Pest Management, and Vineyard Establishment. Each standard had to meet the following three criteria to be included:

1. It must be measurable, in other words physical evidence that the practice had been carried out.
2. It must maintain or enhance one or more of the three E's of sustainability, those being environmental soundness, socially equitable, and economically viable.
3. It must be technically and economically feasible, and not be an unachievable standard.

LWC submitted the draft standards to Protected Harvest in late 2004 for review and some modification was required for Board accreditation, which was granted in early 2005. The program was named the *Lodi Rules for Sustainable Winegrowing* and was launched in the 2005 growing season. Over the past five years certified sustainable acreage has grown to nearly 21,000 acres.