



DID YOU KNOW?

WINERIES

Commodity Description

The commercial wine industry spans agriculture, manufacturing, and hospitality, revolving around two main pillars: viticulture and vinification. Viticulture is the science of cultivating, growing, and harvesting all kinds of grapes, including table, juice, and wine grapes. Wine grapes are sweeter than table grapes and far more fragile. To regularly handle and transport these fruits without ruining them, viticulturists must have a delicate hand and know their plants well. Vinification is the conversion of fruit juices (such as grape juice) into wine by fermentation.

What are some state specific facts?

- Maryland - The wine industry generates close to \$4.28 billion in total economic activity in the State of Maryland
- Virginia - The wine industry generates close to \$8.37 billion in total economic activity in the State of Virginia
- West Virginia - The wine industry generates close to \$501.65 million in total economic activity in the State of West Virginia.

What is the current pricing and market trends?

- Wine production began about 8,000 year ago. Today 60 countries produce over 100 billion gallons of wine a year.
- The United States produced 3.8 million tons of wine in 2021 The US is the fourth largest producer of wine and the largest consumer of wine in the world.
- The number of wineries in the US has increase to 10,043 in 2019 from 2,230 in 1998.
- United States wine demand in 2021 is 3.18 gallons per resident up from 1.9 gallons in 1998.
- Wine produced from locally grown grapes, tree fruit or berries has the potential to add 8 to 10 times the value to the crop.

What are legal considerations or laws that are relevant to the industry?

Before producing wine for sale, the business must apply for and receive a permit from both the federal and state government.

- Contact the Department of Treasury, [Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau](#)- for a Federal Wine Permit.
- A list of each states liquor regulators can be found at the [Wine Institute](#)

State laws tightly regulate the marketing and distribution of wine in their state. Complying with those laws is a must-do. Shipping wine into another state requires the wine-seller to comply with the laws of that state.

What best practices for grape vineyard management?

Irrigation

Grapevines are perennial crops with water requirements that shift considerably from one growth stage to the next. Young vines, in particular, require more frequent irrigation because their root systems are still developing and cannot access moisture stored deeper in the soil profile. Established vines with deep root systems are far more resilient, but they still benefit from monitored irrigation, especially during dry periods.

- Drip Irrigation has become the standard for modern vineyard management because it delivers water precisely to the root zone, reduces evaporation losses, limits surface weed germination, and supports consistent fruit quality.

Weed Management

Weeds in a vineyard are not just an aesthetic problem – they directly compete with vines for water, nutrients, and light. In mature vineyards, weeds interfere with harvest operations and can contaminate drying fruit. No single weed control method works universally. Effective management combines preventive, mechanical, and chemical approaches, with the right mix depending on vine age, weed species present, soil type, and irrigation method used.

- Cultural and Mechanical Weed Control - Cultural weed control means using practices that make the crop more competitive – cover crops between vine rows are a primary tool. Mechanical cultivation using disc ploughs, blade cultivators, or under-vine cultivators – physically removes weeds without chemicals. Cultivation tools need to be positioned to avoid damaging vine roots and irrigation lines.

Training and Pruning

Grapevines fruit on one-year-old wood – shoots produced from buds that developed during the previous season. This biological fact is the foundation of all pruning decisions. Without annual pruning, vines quickly develop a tangle of unproductive old wood, shaded canopy, and poor air circulation.

- A training system defines the permanent structure of the vine – its trunk, arms or cordons – and determines how the fruiting wood is positioned on the trellis each year.
- Cane pruning - one or two one-year-old canes are selected each dormant season, tied to the fruiting wire, and the previous season's canes are removed entirely. Spur pruning - retains short sections of one-year-old wood – the spurs – cut back to just two to four buds along the permanent cordon.

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