



GROWER MARKETING COMMITTEE  
MEETING MINUTES  
October 28, 2024

The Grower Marketing Committee of the Lodi Winegrape Commission met at 12:00pm on Monday, October 28, at the Lodi Winegrape Commission office, 2545 W. Turner Rd., Lodi, CA.

The meeting was called to order at 12:20pm.

Roll was called. Committee members Joan Kautz, Curt Gillespie, Garret Schaefer, Ben Kolber, Craig Ledbetter, and Aaron Shinn, and guests Lexi Burns (Ironstone Vineyards) along with staff Stuart Spencer, Jenny Heitman, and Katie Crippen were in attendance.

A quorum was established.

Minutes from August 20, 2024, meeting (Exhibit A) were approved. Schaeffer / Kolber – carried.

**Public Comment on Items Appearing on the Agenda**

No public comments on items appearing on the agenda were made.

**Marketing & Advertising**

Staff provided an overview of ongoing and future marketing and advertising initiatives. Due to current market and budget projections, the committee continues to proceed cautiously with regards to paid advertising. Currently, no commitments have been made to partners for 2024-25. In lieu of paid advertising, the committee will place additional emphasis on grower outreach and education as well as public relations initiatives and organic marketing on owned channels including email, social media, and websites.

**Public Relations**

Staff provided an overview of ongoing and future public relations activities.

**Travel Media Pitch & Mailer (October/November 2024)** – We are working with Calhoun & Company to pitch a selection of travel writers on Lodi tourism. Ten to fifteen of the most highly qualified writers will receive a physical mailer with wine and branded merchandise including a luggage tag.

**Dallas Travel Media & ZAP Dinner Events (November 12-13, 2024)** – We are hosting a reception for 20-30 travel media in the Dallas area on November 12. On November 13, Lodi will be the exclusive wine sponsor for a Zinfandel-focused event with celebrity chef Kent Rathbun.



**Liquor Board of Ontario (LCBO) Lodi Tour (November 12-15, 2024)** – As part of the California Wines Export Program, we will be hosting Dr. George Soleas (President), Abhay Garg, (V.P. Merchandising), and Marie Cundari (Sr. Director, New World Wines) with the LCBO in Lodi in mid-November. The group is seeking to learn more about the region. Also, to discover new wines for the Ontario market.

**Export Marketing (March 2025)** – The Commission will be hosting two Lodi-exclusive events before ProWein; one in Copenhagen, Denmark on March 10, and one in Warsaw, Poland on March 12. In addition to having a table at ProWein 2025, Stuart will be hosting three seminars in the California Wine Pavillion. Staff is working with the Wine Institute team to utilize available Market Access Program (MAP) dollars.

**Field Blends Tour (June 2-6, 2025)** – Maryam Ahmed with Maryam + Company is interested in hosting a Field Blends educational wine tour in Lodi for wine professionals in 2025. Field Blends tours aim to bring greater visibility to the destination region.

**Samantha Sommelier Lodi Wine Tour (spring/fall 2025)** – Wine educator and sommelier, Samantha Capaldi, will host a tour for 60-100 “Sam Somm’s Wine Club” members in Lodi in 2025. Capaldi will coordinate with the Commission on timing, facilities, etc.

**Old Vine Conference 2024 & 2025** – Stuart Spencer presented on the economic viability of old vine vineyards in Lodi at the 2024 virtual conference on October 17. The Old Vine Conference will be hosted in-person in California in 2025. Spencer is coordinating Lodi’s involvement with conference partners The Old Vine Conference and Zinfandel Advocates & Producers (ZAP). The conference will coincide with California Wines’ Global Buyers Marketplace.

#### **Grower Outreach & Education**

**Wine Duty Drawback Blog (LodiGrowers.com)** – Stuart Spencer published a blog post highlighting wine duty drawback’s negative effect on the California grape and wine market. The post has sparked interest from media outlets including California Insider and Ag Alert. Calhoun & Company is pitching the blog to various targeted media outlets to extend reach.

**Sustainable Ag Expo Presentation & Grower Networking Event (November 11-14, 2024)** – Stephanie Bolton, PhD, will be presenting a proof-of-concept study for dogs’ effectiveness in detecting mealybugs and leafroll virus in vineyards at the summit. Prior to the summit, Bolton will host a networking event designed to make connections between Lodi winegrowers and grape buyers.

**San Joaquin Delta College (SJDC) Viticulture & Enology Programming (ongoing)** – Instructor Fred Swan will host a viticulture and enology course titled “Introduction to Viticulture, Winemaking, Wines of the World” at the Lodi Wine Visitor Center in 2025. The course will take place on Thursday evenings between January 16 and May 15. SJDC has recently hired two new agriculture instructors.



### **FY 2023-24 Budget Review**

The committee reviewed the budget through September 2024 (Exhibit B).

### **Reports from Other Committees**

#### **Winery Marketing Committee**

**Winery BID** – The management district plan has been completed and the petition process is pending. Bylaws are currently in review. Once approved, the steering committee plans to host an all-winery meeting to kickstart the petition process.

**San Diego Bay Wine & Food Festival (November 8-9, 2024)** – The committee is sponsoring 12 Lodi wineries to attend The Grand Decant on Friday, November 8, and The Grand Tasting on Saturday, November 9. Jenny and Katie will be attending the event to offer winery support. Also, to provide promotional materials (wine trail maps, educational brochures, merchandise) to event attendees.

**Community Benchmark Visitation Report** – A recent report by Community Benchmark – a DTC reporting platform – has indicated that Lodi is one of the few regions in the nation that has seen an increase in visitors and tasting room sales by as much as 12% over the past year.

#### **Research, Education & Communications Committee**

**Vineyard ROI Calculation Workshop (October 16, 2024)** – The committee hosted a workshop on the new Return on Investment (ROI) Excel Worksheet created by Pinion and the Lodi Winegrape Commission. Growers learned how to use the tool to calculate existing or future vineyard return on investment over time so that they can more confidently enter contract negotiations and make important financial decisions for their farming operation.

#### **Public Comment on Items Not Appearing on the Agenda**

No public comments on items not appearing on the agenda were made.

#### **Set Next Meeting Date**

The next meeting of the Grower Marketing Committee is scheduled for Thursday, January 9, at 12:00pm.

#### **Adjourn**

The meeting adjourned at 2:12pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Joan Kautz, Committee Chair

**Questions or requests for further information should be directed to Joan Kautz (209-712-3300) or Stuart Spencer (209-367-4727).**