

Wine Council of Ontario
Strategic Plan 2010-2015

authentic
VQA
local



Who we are

The Wine Council of Ontario (WCO) is the champion of Ontario's high quality, authentically local Vintner's Quality Alliance (VQA) wines and of promoting wine country as a destination.

As a non-profit trade association, WCO represents 70-plus wineries from across the designated viticulture areas of the province: Niagara, Prince Edward County, Lake Erie North Shore and Pelee Island.

Our members are grape growers, manufacturers and leaders in tourism in their communities. We are the future of Ontario's wine industry, which is a source of new investment, jobs and award-winning wines.

Supporting authenticity

Our role is to promote Ontario VQA wines and vintners, support the production of excellent local wines valued both at home and abroad, and build on the substantial economic benefits that the VQA wine industry brings to the province. Authentically local VQA wine is made without imported grapes.

Mission

The Wine Council of Ontario leads the growth and sustainability of Ontario's VQA wines.

Vision

The Wine Council will undertake:

- Advocacy and actions to foster the development of a *profitable and growing business environment* for VQA wines
- *To grow sales of VQA wines* to ensure the success of all partners on the value chain
- To ensure that *100 per cent authentically local VQA wines* own the hearts and minds of wine consumers both in Ontario and in our growing markets outside Ontario

Strategic Plan 2010-2015

This plan was developed with the engagement of Wine Council members, under the leadership of its Board of Directors. Over the course of almost 12 months, members were active participants in the development of our mission, vision and strategic priorities through surveys, Town Hall meetings and the Annual General Meeting. The mission, vision and strategic priorities received final review and approval at a Town Hall meeting in October 2010.

Five strategic priorities will guide WCO over five years:

- **Growing opportunities for VQA wine sales**
- **WCO leadership and relationships**
- **Membership growth and value**
- **Excellence in promoting Wine Country Ontario**
- **Bettering the Ontario wine industry**

Did you know?

Wine-producing countries around the world define the best wine-growing regions (or "appellations") and set standards for their wines of origin. VQA is Ontario's "appellation of origin" system, imposing strict quality standards, and conveying both quality and label integrity for all Ontario wines of origin.

When you see VQA and an appellation name on a wine bottle label, it means that – from vineyard to glass – the wine has had its origin certified, it is made from 100 per cent Ontario-grown grapes, and has passed through a quality assurance program.





Priority #1

Growing opportunities for VQA wine sales

Independent industry figures show the number of litres of authentically local VQA wines sold in Ontario grew by 14.1 per cent for the year ended March 31, 2010, and by more than 50 per cent over the past five years.

WCO members represent the growth engine of Ontario's wine industry, and are responsible for growing and processing about 50 per cent of the volume of Ontario's grapes. They provide a vital market for local farmers and surrounding communities. With the growth of VQA wines, the demand for quality grapes will continue to increase.

In addition, WCO members provide a nearly \$140-million annual boost to Ontario's economy through jobs, tourism and investment. For each litre of authentically local VQA wine sold in Ontario, \$11.50 in economic benefits is generated, compared to \$7.72 per litre of wine blended with imported grapes, and \$0.67 for imported wine.

Goals for 2010-2015

- Development and execution of annual marketing strategies that increase the value and scope of VQA wine sales
- Active engagement with current and potential retail/trade partners to align marketing goals and investments, in support of expanded retail opportunities
- Advocacy to reduce regulatory barriers that restrict access to VQA wines
- Support of nationally led export initiatives

Priority #2

WCO leadership and relationships

WCO will continue to work closely with governments, grape growers, the LCBO and other partners to foster a supportive public policy climate to continue the successful growth and expansion of VQA wines.

Goals for 2010-2015

- Continue to provide thought leadership for VQA wines in the province and be looked on as the voice of VQA wines. Success will be reflected in membership growth, achievement of advocacy efforts and a continued positive reputation with stakeholders
- Modernize the grape pricing process to ensure greater economic benefit for all partners on the value chain
- Active engagement with all stakeholders in agriculture, tourism, retail, trade, government and the wine industry

Priority #3

Membership growth and value

WCO is the only organization that speaks for VQA wine producers across the province. With a shared vision and common purpose, WCO's membership will continue to grow.

Goals 2010-2015

- Consistently measure and improve member satisfaction
- Continuously improve communication tools for members
- Increase the level of member engagement in key Wine Council activities, e.g. board, committees, member forums, advocacy



Priority #4

Excellence in promoting Wine Country Ontario

Wine Country Ontario is a trademark of the Wine Council of Ontario and our “consumer-facing” brand. Promoting Wine Country Ontario on behalf of the industry includes production and distribution of the popular Wine Country Ontario Travel Guide, and product placement and promotions with the LCBO.

Goals 2010-2015

- Deliver excellence and results to current and future government marketing partnerships
- Continuous measurable improvement in usage and performance of key Wine Council assets – Wine Route, Wine Country Ontario Travel Guide, Visitors First program
- Active engagement with, and leadership in, industry partnerships, e.g. regional tourism and culinary organizations

The Wine Council of Ontario owns and operates the following programs for the benefit of its members and the Ontario wine industry:



Priority #5

Bettering the Ontario wine industry

The Wine Council of Ontario will continue its focus on improving Ontario’s wine industry and building a strong platform for VQA wines and the appellation system.

WCO will continue to lead its renowned Sustainable Winemaking Ontario program, which promotes best practices in vineyard management, production facilities and the retail environment. We foresee the program being a key part of the growing reputation of Ontario’s VQA winemakers. The Wine Council is also a partner in Ontario Grape and Wine Research Inc., a collaborative effort of growers and wineries investing in industry research.

We will continue to operate the Visitors First quality assurance program and provide the Wine Appellations of Ontario course to educate hospitality providers and consumers alike.

The economic impact of producing VQA wines will continue to be measured and reported on by WCO.

Goals 2010-2015

- Active leadership in industry research
- Ongoing assessment of the economic impact and benefits of Ontario’s VQA wines and WCO winery members
- Increase member participation in the Wine Council’s Sustainable Winemaking Ontario program and implement a certification process to enhance its value
- Partnership with and support for VQA Ontario and its goals for excellence in quality for VQA wines and improving awareness and understanding of wines of origin



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OF ONTARIO



For more information about the Wine Council of Ontario, please visit

www.winecountryontario.ca