

2021 E-09 Report: *Snyder, E., M. Hoffmann, G. Giese, and T. Hatch*

Cover cropping outreach tools and trainings for North Carolina vineyards

The objective of this project is to inform North Carolina wine grape growers on the benefits, tradeoffs, and best management practices for growing cover crops in wine grape vineyards. To achieve this, the project leaders aim to consolidate vineyard cover crop research findings into a cover crop decision management guide that can be utilized to help growers select appropriate cover crops for meeting specific vineyard management goals. These may include reducing erosion, controlling vigor, reducing herbicide use, or enhancing vineyard aesthetics. In addition, the project leaders aim to demonstrate necessary equipment and practices through planting demonstrations and on-site training for vineyard managers and Extension Agents. Finally, the project aims to train Extension Agents to maximize impact and disseminate information to wine grape growers in their respective regions.

The vineyard cover crop decision guide will summarize research conducted in North Carolina's Yadkin Valley as well as other vineyard cover crop research from Eastern states, including Virginia, Pennsylvania, and New York. The following authors will contribute to the cover crop decision guide: Mark Hoffmann (NC State University), Tremain Hatch (Virginia Tech), and Gil Giese (Univ. of New Mexico). The authors will reach out to other researchers and collaborators to fill in different sections of the guide as appropriate. This will be submitted through NSCU's Extension publication system by fall of 2022.

In fall 2021, the group established a cover crop demonstration planting at Raffaldini Vineyards in Ronda, Wilkes County, NC. This planting included Elite II Fescue, creeping red fescue, and a combination of these two species as undervine cover crops in an established vineyard. In 2022, the vineyard and project collaborators from NCSU and N.C. Cooperative Extension will host a field day for growers and Extension Agents in the region to see the cover crop planting and learn about cover cropping establishment and management practices for vineyards. The project collaborators will also announce the upcoming cover crop decision management guide as a future tool that will be available for regional grape producers and agents to utilize in the coming years.

Given personnel changes, the project has experienced delays in the development of the cover crop vineyard decision making tool. However, some progress has been made and we anticipate the project to continue along the following timeline:

- April 30, 2022: First draft of all sections will be completed.
- May 31, 2022: Revisions of first draft to be completed.
- June 30, 2022: Final Version is assembled and will be submitted for proof reading to NCSU Extension.
- June -July 2022: Vineyard cover crop field day hosted at Raffaldini Vineyards.
- August 30, 2022: Final Version is ready to be submitted!

At the time of this report (1/18/2022), about 20% of the cover crop decision making guide is assembled.