

ON YOUR COMMERCIAL NURSERY LETTERHEAD

[date]

Michelle Sharrow
Director, Market Development Division
USDA-AMS Specialty Crop Program
1400 Independence Ave., SW
Washington, DC 20250

VIA EMAIL: Michelle.sharrow@usda.gov

Dear Director Sharrow;

We are one of the commercial grapevine nurseries who participated in the American Grapevine Genetics Research Initiative (AGGRI) Working Group meeting for nearly two years to build a national Research and Promotion (R&P) Program under USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service. This letter is intended to show our support for an R&P Program that assesses commercial grapevine nurseries to fund long-term game-changing research.

For too long our industry suffered from inconsistent grant awards, changing political winds, and shifting organizational focus—all that impacted research projects which required consistent funding over multiple years. This will be the first time in the U.S. history of growing grapes to have nationally raised industry monies support research that can increase our competitive advantage and improve our sustainability through genetic improvement with the potential to make grapevines more pest and disease resistant, requiring less pesticide applications, more water use efficient, more adaptable to mechanization, and increase production efficiency.

What makes this effort unique is that it is not about open-ended research but instead, applied, product-focused science with funding strategies aligned with real outcomes--functional tools, defined traits, and varietal improvements--that directly benefits growers (from all grape sectors--raisin, wine, table, and juice) with the goal to move traits across the finish line, not just advance academic knowledge.

In closing, we strongly support AGGRI as an industry-funded mechanism (via grapevine nursery assessments) to create a reliable, industry-directed source of funding.

Sincerely,

Signature

FIRST NAME LAST NAME

TITLE