

## COMMODITY

## GRAPES

### Description

British Columbia's grape and wine industry is concentrated in the Okanagan and Similkameen Valleys but grapes are also grown in the Fraser Valley, Kootenays, Shuswap and Vancouver Island. Commercial grapes are sold for immediate consumption, processed on-site into juice, jam, jelly, wine or other products, or sold to a winery or third party.

Some commercial grape farms may have winery licences. Wineries require buildings for making wine and storage facilities for wine and inventory, loading and unloading areas, public parking and access areas and areas for disposal of grape and winery waste materials.

Commercial grape and wine production requires labour and equipment for cultural practices, land clearing and preparation, planting, pruning and harvesting. Grape producers may use farm equipment such as tractors, cultivators, sprayers, and harvesters. On-farm infrastructure may include irrigation lines, wells, plant supports, loading and unloading facilities, netting, power lines, machinery sheds, chemical and other storage facilities. Vines and grapes must be protected from climatic events, pests, diseases and wildlife. On-farm wineries require wine-making and storage buildings, parking and facilities for hosting customers.

### Farm Practices of Particular Interest

Practices for specific farm activities can be found in the Farm Practice section of this reference guide. Farm practices that are of particular interest to grape production include:

#### Aircraft Activities

Grape growers may use helicopters to protect their crops from frost damage and other climatic events. See Farm Practice: [Mobile Equipment](#)

#### Direct Marketing

Some grape producers are licensed to operate an on-farm winery. Vineyards and wineries may participate in activities related to the agri-tourism industry through a wide range of activities including, but not limited to: bus tours, operating a bed and breakfast, operating a winery lounge, wine tastings, music festivals, weddings, and other promotional activities.

See Farm Practice: [Direct Farm Marketing and Agriculture Tourism](#)

#### Frost Protection

Wind machines may be used to protect vineyards from frosts. Wind machines are generally activated late at night or early in the morning, but may be operated at any time. Smudge pots, heaters and irrigation systems may also be used for frost protection.

See Farm Practice: [Stationary Equipment](#)

## **Irrigation**

Grapes require irrigation in most regions of the province to grow a viable crop. Irrigation systems usually operate 24 hours per day. Fertilizers may be applied through the irrigation system.

See Farm Practice: [Irrigation](#)

## **Liming**

It is common practice to apply lime on a regular basis. Some lime materials are subject to blowing and drifting.

See Farm Practice: [Fertilizers and Soil Conditioners](#)

## **On-Farm Processing**

Liquor Control and Licensing Regulations stipulate that Farm and Estate wineries and their activities and their retail outlets must be located on the vineyard. Land Reserve Commission regulations permit the establishment of on-farm processing facilities with retail outlets in addition to wineries and their retail stores on land in an Agricultural Land Reserve. Estate and Farm winery retail outlets may sell processed farm products and a wide range of off-farm products. Grape growers or wineries may employ mobile bottling and/or filtering and/or labeling services. Large commercial wineries may locate on a vineyard if they wish. All wineries may serve food at their facilities under certain provisions.

See Farm Practice: [Farmstead Refuse](#)  
[Product Processing](#)  
[Storage of Farm Supplies and Products](#)

## **Pesticide Application**

Pesticides are applied mainly between April and October, but application may occur during the winter months, from November to March. Pesticides may be applied at any time of day or night. Most applications are done when winds are calm. This usually occurs late at night or early in the morning. Sometimes the only way growers can get their crops treated in the time frame needed to ensure proper pest control is to spray at night.

Fields may be fumigated prior to new stock being planted. A liquid fumigant is usually used and is applied in the fall or spring with weed sprayers and may be watered in during and after application. Fumigants may also be injected into the soil or a granular formulation may be broadcast and incorporated into the soil.

See Farm Practice: [Pesticides](#)  
[Storage of Hazardous Material](#)  
[Weed Control](#)

## **Pruning**

Vines may be pruned either by hand or mechanically. Prunings are usually piled and burned but are sometimes mulched and spread over the land. Burning should be conducted in accordance with the Open Burning Smoke Control Regulation and Code of Practice.

See Farm Practice: [Burning](#)  
[Crop Residue Management](#)  
[Mobile Equipment](#)

## **Transportation**

Grape producers and on-farm processors may have vehicles making deliveries and hauling products 24 hours a day. Producers must supply adequate areas on the farm property to handle the volume, movement, and parking of trucks and other traffic related to the activities and production of the farm. Operations, which sell directly to the public, must provide adequate parking for customers to park off the road.

See Farm Practice: [Transportation](#)  
[Direct Farm Marketing and Agriculture Tourism](#)

## Wildlife Control

Grape growers may use netting, noise making devices or other methods of control to protect crops from wildlife damage.

See Farm Practice: [Wildlife Damage Control – South Coastal BC](#)  
[Wildlife Damage Control – Interior BC](#)

## Legislation

Agricultural producers are expected to follow all legislation that pertains to their farming operation. The *Farm Practices Protection (Right to Farm) Act* stipulates that the farm operation must meet the *Health Act*, *Pesticide Control Act*, *Waste Management Act* and the regulations under those acts. Information on federal and provincial legislation can be found in Appendices B and C.

Acts that pertain to specific farm activities are listed in the farm practices section of this reference guide. Local government bylaws may also apply to some farm practices. Acts that are not referenced elsewhere that are of special interest to grape producers include the following:

### Provincial

*British Columbia Wine Act* – establishes a wine institute which may establish standards

*Liquor Control and Licensing Act* – outlines powers of Liquor Control and Licensing Branch

*Liquor Distribution Act* – governs the wholesale and retail sale of liquor

*Plant Protection Act*

*B.C. Grapevine Disease Control Regulation* – provides for the prevention of the spread of pests destructive to grape plants in B.C.

### Local Government

Applicable *Noise Bylaws* and *On Farm Marketing Bylaws*.

## Publications

Publications that provide information on grape production include, but are not limited to, the following (refer to Appendix D for details):

*A Guide for Liquor Manufacturers and their Representatives in British Columbia*

*British Columbia Environmental Farm Plan Reference Guide*

*Management Guide for Grapes for Commercial Growers*

*Protecting Orchards from Spring Frosts*