

Kansas State Fair Grape Stomp Features Young Producers — Celebrities to Promote Kansas' Grape, Wine Industries

The state's youngest grape growers will be among the celebrities at the Seventh Annual Great Kansas Grape Stomp this week at the Kansas State Fair.

FFA members from Mission Valley High School in Eskridge grew 185 pounds of Noiret grapes that will be used in the grape stomp, which will take place at 3 p.m. Friday at the Lake Talbott Stage on the Kansas State Fairgrounds in Hutchinson.

"Not only will this year's grape stomp promote the grape and wine industry in Kansas but it will also help young grape growers gain valuable, real world production experience," Kansas Secretary of Agriculture Dale Rodman said. "The grape and wine industry in Kansas is recognized as one of the most exciting wine producing regions in the United States. We are committed to doing what we can to help this industry continue growing in the future."

Mission Valley FFA members are among those who are expected to attend the event on Friday. Three members of the FFA chapter grew grapes alongside a Kansas producer for their Supervised Agricultural Experience, which gives FFA members hands-on experience working in an agricultural setting.

The FFA members will earn about \$600 from this year's grape harvest.

The Kansas grape and wine industry continues to grow each year. Kansas producers grow about 350 acres of grapes in vineyards across the state, the majority of which are processed at the state's 31 licensed wineries. Representatives of these industries will be among those who attend the event.

Public officials, agricultural and economic leaders and other dignitaries have been stomping grapes at the Kansas State Fair since 2004. The 2012 participants are:

- Kansas State Fair President Jeff Deeds, Goodland
- Kansas State Fair Board Member Harmon Bliss, Jetmore
- Kansas Secretary of Wildlife Parks and Tourism Robin Jennison, Topeka
- Associate Director of K-State Research and Extension Dr. Daryl Buchholz, Manhattan
- University of Kansas Student Body President Hannah Bolton, Lawrence
- Kansas State University Student Body Vice-President Grant Hill, Manhattan
- Kansas State Fair Manager Denny Stoecklein, Hutchinson
- Kansas State Fair Community Ambassador Richard Shank, Hutchinson

Longtime Kansas agricultural journalist Larry Steckline will serve as the celebrity announcer for the event, which will also feature live music by Bob Colladay, of the Hutchinson-based group Simone du Garfunk.