

**MEDIA RELEASE**  
**20 August 2009**

**WINE INDUSTRY ENCOURAGED TO FOCUS ON FUTURE AT OPENING OF  
MAJOR WINE INDUSTRY CONFERENCE**

New Zealand grapegrowers and winemakers at a major wine industry conference in Napier today, committed to continuing their focus on the quality New Zealand wines are world-renowned for, in order to ensure the future success of the industry.

Chairman of New Zealand Winegrowers, Stuart Smith, opened the 15<sup>th</sup> annual Romeo Bragato conference by congratulating the New Zealand grape and wine industry on their combined success, as export sales near the significant \$1 billion milestone.

However Mr Smith warned that New Zealand grapegrowers and winemakers must continue to manage the balance between supply and demand in the industry in order for this growth to continue and the quality reputation to be maintained.

Minister of Agriculture Hon David Carter also addressed the delegates this morning.

Romeo Bragato 2009, which runs from 20-22 August at Pettigrew-Green Arena in Taradale, Napier, is New Zealand's major technical conference for the grape growing and wine industry and is this year themed *Where to from here?*

The conference's key Bragato Address "Past, present and future – impacts of research and technology on quality wine production" will be delivered by Professor Sakkie Pretorius, Managing Director of The Australian Wine Research Institute.

Other speakers at the three-day conference include:

- Ben Russell, general manager of Rabobank's Rural Banking team, who will deliver the Rabobank Address, focusing on the global wine business and where it's heading in the current economic times.
- Mission Estate Winery CEO Peter Holley, who will discuss the control and elimination of Type 3 leaf roll virus. Peter will be supported by Professor Gerhard Pietersen of Citrus Research International at the University of Pretoria in South Africa, and Geoff Thorpe, of Riversun Nursery Ltd. in Gisborne.
- Andrew Barber of The Agribusiness Group, who will present the BEST tool for reducing energy use for wineries. Stuart Dykes of Corban's Hawke's Bay

Winery and Peter Mann of Yealands Estate Wines will also share how they have reduced energy use for their wineries

- Tony Profitt of Precision Viticulture, Australia, who will discuss the value of mapping for Australian vineyards
- Kim Thorp of advertising agency Assignment Group, who will report on the evolution of food and wine tourism in Hawke's Bay since 1990.

The conference programme also features New Zealand's only awards for the grapegrower - the Romeo Bragato Wine Awards, the Markhams Young Viticulturalist of the Year and the Silver Secateurs awards. These awards will be announced at a gala dinner on Saturday 22 August.

For more information on events and key note speakers including times visit [www.bragato.org.nz](http://www.bragato.org.nz).

### **Editors' notes**

The Romeo Bragato conference is named after a man who arrived on New Zealand shores on February 19, 1895. Fresh from Italy with his Diploma in Viticulture and Oenology in hand, the then New Zealand Government escorted Romeo Bragato from one end of the country to the other to visit and advise on our local vineyards.

Regrettably his work was not acted on and lay forgotten for over 60 years. Dusted off by a few pioneers in the 1970s and early 1980s, many of the recommendations of Romeo Bragato form the basis of modern New Zealand viticulture practices.

### **For further information and copies of speechnotes please contact:**

Sarah McGregor  
nbpr  
Mob: 027 283 5694