INFORMATION FOR NEW VINEYARD OWNERS
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SECTION 1

1.1 Planning and Other Considerations

Site selection is critical to the success of a vineyard and therefore consultation with specialist land agents and/or management organisations, or a specialist viticulture consultancy is highly recommended.

Planting Vineyards in protected locations (such as National Parks etc) may require consultation with the National Parks Authority and this should be undertaken during the evaluation process.

Change of use of land or buildings needs to be considered during the evaluation process and consultation with specialist land agents or management organisations should be considered.

Planning permission, for buildings such as wineries, bottling facilities etc. may be required and discussions should be made to local planning authorities.

Some buildings such as barns and equipment storage, may have been constructed under agricultural notices and this may restrict their change of use, therefore, again discussions should be held with local planning authorities.

1.2 Vineyard Registration

All vineyards over 0.1 hectare (approximately a quarter of an acre) in size are legally required to be registered with the Food Standards Agency (FSA). Owners must register their vines no later than 6 months after planting them and must notify the FSA of subsequent changes.

The main purpose of registration is to help establish the authenticity of wine and to monitor yields and production levels. Registration is free and there are no charges for our inspections or for any advice we offer.

Registration forms can be downloaded from our website, completed electronically and then submitted by email or they can be printed off and posted to FSA Wine Standards for distribution to the appropriate Regional Wine Standards Inspector. You should keep a copy of each of the completed forms for your records.

The registration forms require details of the vine varieties planted, the year of the planting, the area of each variety, the planting density and details of certain vineyard features.

When planting bear in mind that some grape varieties (including hybrid grape
varieties) are not suitable for wines produced with the intention of obtaining PDO or PGI certification.

If you want to sell grapes, speak to winemakers to see what vine varieties, they recommend and what prices they would offer. We would also suggest you speak to a vineyard consultant to ascertain which vine varieties and root stocks may do well in the soil and aspect you have at the proposed vineyard. Another consideration for this type of grape production would be a formal contract to protect both parties, some examples of contracts are available (membership required) from the WineGB website or the winery may have their own.

https://www.food.gov.uk/business-guidance/uk-vineyard-register#registering-a-uk-vineyard-you-will-have-to-register-a-new-uk-vineyard-by-using-the-application-form

1.3 Vineyard Categories

Vineyard Categories
There are different vineyard categories and FSA involvement varies accordingly. The category applied to a vineyard can easily be changed to reflect the actual circumstances at any given time.

Abandoned vineyard – these are vineyards which are not routinely maintained. Apart from the cost and effort involved, they could be restored although often, in time, they may be grubbed up. We regard these as low priorities. We would normally contact the holder to see if the status has changed and we would only visit every four years.

Hobby vineyard – grapes are grown for personal enjoyment and any wine made is for the holder’s own consumption. No grapes or wine are sold. We regard these as low priorities and our approach is the same as for abandoned vineyards.

Commercial vineyard – The grapes are grown and sold as a commercial crop to a winery, or other manufacturer for grape juice or other product. In this type of system, you may want to consider having a formal contract to protect both parties. Some example contracts are available (membership required) from the WineGB website or the winery/manufacturer taking your crop may have their own. Grapes must be transported with a Commercial Accompanying Document (CAD) unless exemptions apply. The holder would be contacted every two years to see if anything has changed and we would visit every four years.

Commercial vineyard making/selling wine – the holder will grow their own grapes and then either vinify them on site or the grapes are grown and sent to a Commercial Winery for vinification, this may include or exclude the bottling process, the finished wine is then returned to the vineyard for sale. The holder producing wine must
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complete a production return (WSB 21) annually indicating the type and quantity of
wine made. We would visit these vineyards at least once a year if they make their
own wine or once every two years if they have their wine made under contract on a
different site.
If the holder producers their own wine, they must notify the FSA of oenological
practices to enrich, or deacidify wines, maintain accurate winery records, records of
any grapes they may buy or sell and submit an annual wine production declaration.

Commercial Contract Winemaker – the holder may in addition to making their own
wine also make wine for other growers. Both commercial vineyards and hobby
vineyards use contract winemakers to make wine for them. We would normally visit
these premises twice a year. Again, the holder must notify the FSA of oenological
practices to enrich, or deacidify wines, maintain accurate winery records, records of
any grapes they may buy or sell and submit an annual wine production declaration.

1.4 Vineyard Activities

Selection and Application of Plant Protection Products
It is recommend that to ensure that the correct PPP, or other agricultural chemicals
are selected and used, that the services of an Agronomist or consultant or person
with the correct qualifications are used.
If you wish to carry out this work yourself, you will need certificates of competence to
apply Plant Protection Products (PPP’s) with a sprayer. You must also undertake
training and pass the relevant Pesticide Application (PA) exams. In the UK the only
body recognised for training & testing is the NPTC.
WineGB has a booklet of approved Agricultural chemicals (the Green Book) that can
be used in UK vineyards (WineGB membership is required to access this
document.)
SECTION 2

2.1 Wine Classification

Wine is classified as either;

“Wine”
“Varietal Wine”
“Wine with a Protected Geographical Indication” (PGI) e.g. Regional Wine
“Wine with a Protected Denomination of Origin” (PDO) e.g. Quality Wine

Wine
Is the basic product made in accordance with the wine regulations, but which has not been assessed or certified in any way. We advise producers to obtain a post bottling analysis and keep the results with their winery records for due diligence purposes and to assist in labelling. Labelling of basic wine is very restrictive – neither the grape variety nor the vintage can be shown on the label. There are also restrictions on how geographical information can be shown.

Varietal Wine
This is basic wine which has not been submitted and approved under either the PDO (Quality Wine Scheme) or the PGI (Regional Wine Scheme) but which has been officially certified to show one or more vine varieties and/or the vintage. Winery records must show details of production for wine intended for this category. Details of the official Certification Process are shown on the WineGB website.

PDO and PGI Wine Schemes
The terms Protected Designation of Origin (PDO) and Protected Geographical Indication (PGI) are used to describe certain food types. As regards wine, PDO applies to Quality Wine and PGI applies to Regional Wine. These terms are used to describe wines which are produced within specific areas and which meet certain quality standards. The schemes involve the assessment and analysis of the wines to ensure they meet the relevant criteria. Wines that pass the schemes can use the protected term “English”, “Welsh” and can also show vine varieties, vintage and certain geographical information on the label. Details of the various UK wine schemes are now published on the WineGB website.

https://www.winegb.co.uk/trade/wine-scheme-applications/
2.2 Wine Production

Wine making may be undertaken either at the vineyard/winery by the winery staff or by using a contract winemaker at a different site.

It is recommended that all wines are tested during the winemaking process either by winery staff or by a laboratory that can provide verifiable testing (UKAS approval or equivariant)

If the wines are being produced as part of a quality wine scheme, then independent testing/verification is required as part of the application process -

https://www.winegb.co.uk/trade/wine-scheme-applications/

2.3 Production Returns

Before the 15th of January each year, wine producers are required to submit a Production Declaration (WSB21 or WSB21b) for wine and other grape products they have produced from the previous year’s harvest.

These returns indicate where the grapes have been vinified and how much wine has been produced in the UK. They also provide part of the audit trail to support Quality or Regional Wine applications and/or Certification for Varietal Wine status.

2.4 Wine Labelling

All four levels of wine have different labelling restrictions and requirements; labelling guidance can be obtained from the links below. Label designs can also be checked with FSA Wine Standards to ensure regulatory compliance.

https://www.food.gov.uk/business-guidance/labelling-wine


2.5 Allergen Labelling

Allergens applicable to wine are sulphates, milk and egg. Statements must be shown if sulphates are equal to or above 10mg/l and if there is a detectable presence of milk or egg in the final product if they have been used as a processing aid (finning agent).

All allergens must be in the format ‘Contains …….’. The term “may contain” must not be used.

SECTION 3
OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

3.1 Food Business Registration

Owners of food businesses, including wineries must register with their Local Authority. Please check the following link;

https://www.gov.uk/food-business-registration

3.2 HMRC Wine Producers Licence

If you produce or intend to produce wine for sale, you must hold an excise licence and you may be liable for alcohol duty payments. The type of excise licence required is known as a wine producer’s licence. Additional information can be found here


3.3 Alcohol Wholesale Registration Scheme

All alcohol wholesalers must be registered with HMRC. It is an offence to supply alcohol by wholesale without being registered and it is also be an offence for companies to purchase alcohol from a non-registered wholesaler. More details can be found here

https://www.gov.uk/guidance/the-alcohol-wholesaler-registration-scheme-awrs

3.4 Alcohol Licences

Alcohol licences are not needed for the wholesale sale of wine to other licensed premises or to other wine traders. However, please also see the earlier note about the Alcohol Wholesaler Registration Scheme. Anybody selling wine to the “final” consumer, irrespective of the quantity involved must hold a Personal Licence and the wine must be delivered from licensed premises.
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Personal Licences are issued by the local council in whose area the vendor lives whilst Premises Licences are issued by the local council where the premises are located. If you wish to sell wine direct to individuals, please contact your Local Authority for further advice.

https://www.gov.uk/guidance/alcohol-licensing

3.5 Internet and Mail Order Sales

If you intend to sell your wine over the internet or by mail order in addition to the normal Alcohol Licenses, both personal and premises Licences. you will need to comply with The Electronic Commerce Regulations 2002 and/or the distance selling guidelines issued by the Department of Trade and Industry. Please follow the link and contact your Local Authority Trading Standards Officer for further advice.

E- commerce https://www.gov.uk/online-and-distance-selling-for-businesses
SECTION 4

4.1 Further Reading

Several books on UK vineyards and general viticulture are available form a number of sources.

Possibly seek the services of a vineyard consultant.

WineGB is the Trade body for the English, Welsh & Scottish Wine Industry, their website can provide some resources https://www.winegb.co.uk/

Wine Law https://www.food.gov.uk/business-guidance/wine-law

Wine Trade Regulations https://www.gov.uk/guidance/wine-trade-regulations

4.2 FSA Wine Standards Team Contacts

Wine Standards Inspection Team
winestandards@food.gov.uk

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Wine Standards Inspector - Central East
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07342080796
Information for New Vineyard Owners

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07881 281 198

Wine Standards Inspector - North, North Wales and Northern Ireland
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Telephone
07881 281188
Information for New Vineyard Owners

- North - Andy Westwell
- Central East - Steve Goff
- Central West - Brian Smith
- London (inside M25) - Liz Gillies
- Home Counties - Matt Dalton-Placzek
- South West - Andy Kilby