

AGRICULTURAL KNOWLEDGE NETWORKING GROUPS

Neighborhood Action Groups: Who, What, Why?

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These data summaries are derived from interviews with 12 coordinators of 9 peer knowledge networking groups operating in Napa County and Lodi, and a survey of 77 of their group members.



WHAT ARE NEIGHBORHOOD ACTION GROUPS?

An informal, volunteer group composed of representatives from neighboring vineyards that seeks to “*promote open communication, knowledge sharing, and allow space for neighbor-to-neighbor collaboration.*”



WHO ARE THE MEMBERS?

- Viticulturists, vineyard managers, and winemakers from vineyards and vineyard management companies, in a highly localized area (1 to 5 miles²).
- Members may also include owners, consultants, extension professionals, service providers, and other team members.
- Typically, there are 5 to 15 active members, plus a larger cohort of members who participate irregularly (~20).



WHAT DO THEY DO?

- The primary activity is informal meetings 3 to 6 times per year (up to 1.5 hours) to connect members and share knowledge and experiences.
- Some groups also conduct organized group projects by themselves or in collaboration with other organizations (see page 2 for examples).



WHAT RESOURCES DO THEY NEED?

- A committed volunteer coordinator(s) who has the time to organize group logistics.
- A venue to meet. Typically, a member hosts the group at their workplace. Groups also conduct meetings online.
- No financial resources. Except if a group decides to conduct an organized project, where the costs are borne by members and/or run in collaboration with an affiliated organization.

SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES OF NEIGHBORHOOD ACTION GROUPS

Group Details	Past & Current Activities
<p>Rutherford Central Formed 2012 <i>Topics: grape & vine mealybug, powdery mildew, Pierce's disease, red blotch.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4-6 meetings/year. Occasionally host local speakers to demonstrate practical use of new technologies or present new information. • Created 'primer' factsheet on mealybug and control strategies. • Coordinated vine and block removal to mitigate leafroll and red blotch diseases. • Mapped mealybug male trap captures (in collaboration with Farm Advisor) to track spread and coordinate pesticide sprays. Data shared with adjacent action group.
<p>Jahant Area Vineyard Alliance (Lodi) Formed 2019 <i>Topic: vine mealybug</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multiple winter meetings. Initial meetings improved knowledge of vine mealybug and management practices. Hosted invited speakers such as research scientists. • Trapping and mapping project: traps are placed in members' vineyards and counts reported. Created maps of trap data and indicated properties where mating disruption has been deployed. • Data are shared during meetings, via email and short videos (2 to 5 mins) hosted on a private YouTube channel. • Website established (www.lodigroweralliance.net) with plans for a live data dashboard.
<p>Oakville East/Hillside Formed 2022 <i>Topic: vine mealybug</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 online meetings/year to share practices adopted, which blocks have vine mealybug, and schedules for scouting and timing of practices (sprays; release of beneficials). • Created a contact list so members can communicate with each other. • Exerted collective pressure to have Argentine ant bait approved by organic certification agency.
<p>Oakville West Formed 2022 <i>Topics: primarily vine mealybug, but also general viticultural issues</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2-3 meetings/year are an open forum for sharing ideas, establishing relationships and building trust between members. • Email list established for communicating with members.
<p>Rutherford North Formed 2023 (currently inactive) <i>Topic: vine mealybug</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 meetings in 2023 & 2024. • The goal was to educate members about control strategies and encourage members to deploy mating disruption for vine mealybug. • Inactive because coordinators are too busy. The group may be reactivated with a new coordinator and reoriented towards red blotch disease management.
<p>Pritchard Hill Formed 2024 <i>Topics: smoke taint, wildfire preparation, powdery mildew, vine mealybug, red blotch</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3+ in person meetings in first year and a separate online meeting with a guest presenter. • Created a contact list for members to communicate with each other.

THE IMPACT OF NEIGHBORHOOD ACTION GROUPS

“The group is successful because it’s about building community. If you really want to dumb it down into one simple word, it’s community. There was no community, and this brings that.”

In surveys, because of their group:

- **85% of members had networked with neighbors.**



- **61% shared staff expertise or data** with neighbors outside of the group.
- **55% learned about a farming practice or technology** that their company has then implemented.
- **51% coordinated straightforward practices with their neighbor** (e.g., synchronized deployment of mating disruption).
- **28% coordinated a complex or high cost practice** (e.g., simultaneous replanting of bordering diseased blocks).
- **11% shared financial or material resources with a neighbor.**



Other positive impacts:

- Reduced conflict between neighbors.
- Perceived reduction in vector populations and/or disease incidence or spread.
- Collective bargaining with certification agencies and suppliers.
- Community resilience to future pests and diseases

Knowledge Network: Napa County Vineyard pest and disease management

Neighborhood Action Group members are more central to the network than others:

- Communicate with more people about vineyard pest and disease management.
- Are more likely to receive, and facilitate the spread of, pest and disease knowledge.
- **Red dots** = neighborhood action group members
- **Grey dots** = non-members in vineyard
- industry Lines link those communicating about pest and disease management.

