

Weather

2006 proved to be a warm year. Above normal winter temperatures ended the calendar year for grape growers across Ontario.

In the Niagara region, January through March saw few days with a minimum temperature below -10°C ; in January Vineland Station measured none at all. While a cold snap in Prince Edward County at the end of February brought that month's average temperature closer to long term normals, unusually warm temperatures began the year there as well. Growers to the southwest also experienced a warm start to the year. January in Harrow saw the average monthly temperature 6.3°C above normal at 1.7°C .

While not as severe as 2005, spring of 2006 had below normal rainfall in the Niagara region. Rainfall in July 2006 measured well above normal, but still not to the extreme of 2005. August and September of 2006 experienced rainfall trends opposite to 2005 with a below normal August and above normal September. Prince Edward County had a drier than normal March and August and more rain than normal in May. Especially wet was Prince Edward County in October, with Trenton measuring 223mm. In the Southwest, Harrow also had a drier than normal spring. From May to October, rainfall in the southwest measured higher than normal for all months except a slightly drier than normal August.

Growing season temperatures for the Niagara region were close to normal with accumulated degree days slightly above normal for April, May and July. At Vineland Station, the last three days of May saw temperatures above 30°C , bringing May's average to its highest in years. In Prince Edward County, monthly average temperatures sunk to normal values for September and October, but measured above normal for all other months. Monthly average temperatures in the Southwest measured closer to normal for most of the season, dropped below normal for September and October, and then maintained autumnal temperatures into the winter.

Like its entrance, 2006 had a warm exit. Temperatures remained above normal for all grape growing regions for November, December and into January 2007. Temperatures in the Niagara region briefly dropped below -10°C for the first time of the season in December, but then remained above -10°C until mid-January. Prince Edward County's wet October had a near normal monthly average temperature, but was followed by three warmer than normal months. To the southwest, Harrow temperatures did not measure below -10°C until January 17th of this year. In December, Harrow's average daily temperatures remained above freezing for all but 6 days.

The GGO and Weather Innovations Incorporated (WIN), formerly known as the Ontario Weather Network (OWN), continue to work together to bring valuable weather-based services to Ontario's grape industry. An example of this is WIN's preparation of this 2006 weather report. WIN is a University of Guelph spin-off company, delivering timely weather based information to organizations and individuals alike. The WIN team will continue to build on their services to the GGO beginning with the upgrade of the Niagara weather network to a near real-time wireless system and by expanding irrigation, disease modeling and temperature inversion programs throughout the region in 2007.

