

7-21-1971

Letter to Arnulf Esterer, Tim Hubbard, and John Moorhead from Dr. Konstantin Frank, 1971

Konstantin Frank

Dr. Konstantin Frank and Sons

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Recommended Citation

Frank, Konstantin (1971). Letter to Arnulf Esterer, Tim Hubbard, and John Moorhead from Dr. Konstantin Frank, 1971. *Markko Vineyard Documents*. Paper 46.

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Area Code 607
868-4884



Willibald K. Frank
Assistant Director
(516) 825-0297

Dr. Konstantin Frank and Sons

*Experimental Nursery, Vineyards and Vinifera Wine Cellars
European Grape Varieties and European Estate Bottled Wines*

R.D. 2, Hammondsport, New York 14840

Messrs. Esterer, Hubbard and Moorhead

July 21, 1971

My dear friends:

I received your draft of a letter written by you on July 6th, 1971. As you know I like not to influence your writing and your opinion and decision. It is written very well. In the beginning I would mention that this decision you have made during our European grape growers convention. Please send these letter to the publisher of the Wines & Vines as well as to the Presidents of yours Universities. It would be very good if the Departments of Agriculture of your States as well as the Federal Departments would received copy of this decision. Congratulation to your success.

Konstantin Frank

P.S.
I do hope you do that soon.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'K. Frank', with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

We grow vinifera wine grapes in co-operation with Dr. Konstantin Frank of Hammondsport, N.Y. to further develop the vinifera segment of the wine industry.

First: we are convinced that vinifera grapes produce the best all-around wine, and second: we are convinced that vinifera grapes can be produced economically for large and small commercial production in the wine industry of the eastern United States.

The impressive vinifera vineyards of Dr. Frank demonstrate the success he has had; and after viewing his, we have planted and are developing vinifera vineyards in Conneaut & North Kingsville, Ohio and in North East, Pennsylvania.

The wine industry and the consuming public need quality grapes in order to compete effectively with vinifera wines from California and the rest of the world. French hybrid grapes and their wine cannot measure up to the quality of the vinifera. Besides, large commercial production of French hybrid grapes may spread disease, insects, and virus, which in turn may cause long term damage to vineyard plantings. Also, there is a question of toxicity in hybrid wine which may affect the consuming public's health. Why grow these hybrids when they produce only mediocre and second-rate wine?

We are writing because we feel this country needs a change in direction and emphasis in wine grape research and development. The new direction should be more toward the growing of vinifera grapes and finding suitable rootstock for them. This means more vinifera plantings plus maximum co-operation among the growers in order to avoid duplication

of effort and to speed up research on vital questions.

The current research and development and planting recommendations in the East are concerned mainly with French hybrids and this can only lead to a limited improvement of an inferior product. French hybrid breeding and evaluation should be encouraged in the hope of finding new varieties which offer a better product on a healthy vine. But recommendations for large or small commercial planting of French hybrids should be withdrawn and expansion of hybrids discouraged or outlawed as it is in most other wine producing countries of the world. We should, however, continue to investigate the toxicity question. But of greatest importance right now is to increase the emphasis on vinifera research and plantings. This can be done most effectively by co-ordinating the efforts of the Research and Experimental Stations of New York, Ohio, and Pennsylvania using the combined experience from Davis, California, Vineland, Ontario, Canada, and European Experimental Stations.

Arnulf Esterly
Edmund H. Hull
John W. Mansfield

July 6, 1971