SAN FRANCISCO – The California Sustainable Winegrowing Alliance (CSWA) participated in an unprecedented international Joint Session on Sustainability on Oct. 19 with other member countries of the World Wine Trade Group (WWTG) and FIVS, an international wine industry trade association, to discuss their national and regional sustainability programs. The goal of the session was to continue the leadership in sustainable agricultural production demonstrated by the world’s wine community. The seminar was an initiative of the WWTG hosted in Santiago, Chile, by Vinos de Chile and the Government of Chile.

An expert panel of representatives from all of the countries and regions with significant national sustainability programs met during this meeting, coming from Argentina, Australia, Canada, Chile, the European Union, New Zealand, South Africa and the United States. The group was united in this historic effort to agree to common principles of sustainability that meet environmental, social and economic sustainability goals within each country or region. They also established a Multi-National Wine Sustainability Committee to build on the initiatives and programmatic requirements.

“We are elated over our global agreement on sustainability principles and the direction that the wine sector is taking to provide world leadership on sustainability,” said CSWA Board Chairman Chris Savage of E. & J. Gallo Winery who represented the U.S.

The panel presented to a group of 200 audience members the basic points of their respective sustainable winegrowing programs, how they preserve and protect the environment, enhance community and employee relations, improve wine quality and ensure social responsibility.

Savage shared details of the CSWA educational program which has been in place since 2002 in California, the world’s fourth leading wine producer. The program is based on a Code of 227 environmental and social criteria within 14 distinct chapters. The Code is used by 1,700 wineries and vineyards, representing 70-plus percent of California’s winegrape acreage and 65 percent of its wine production, accomplished through more than 400 workshops and 9,200 participants.

“Looking to the future, we are developing metrics – such as water and energy use -- to track and improve statewide performance,” added CSWA Executive Director Allison Jordan. “We continue to work to increase adoption of sustainable practices in California and hope to serve as a model for the wine industry in the rest of the U.S. and throughout the world.”
CSWA was established in 2002 in San Francisco by the Wine Institute of California and the California Association of Winegrape Growers to promote the benefits of sustainable winegrowing practices, enlist industry commitment and assist in the implementation of the program.

The World Wine Trade Group is an informal group of government and trade representatives with a mutual interest in facilitating international trade in wine. Members are Argentina, Australia, Canada, Chile, Georgia, New Zealand, South Africa and the United States, with Brazil participating as an observer. Encouraging and coordinating sustainability programs have been an important part of the WWTG agenda since 2002. FIVS is a worldwide organization for the alcohol beverage industry, including wine, beer and spirits. Its members include producers, distributors, importers, exporters and trade associations.

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