

WEST COAST SMOKE EXPOSURE TASK FORCE

2025 Smoke Summit, July 15
Q&A

#	Question	Answer
1	At what stage of the grape growing cycle is the plant/fruit most vulnerable to negative impacts of smoke?	Any time there are grapes on the vine the crop is susceptible to smoke exposure, although it seems like after veraison is more impactful than before. There is still risk prior to fermentation.
2	At what point is flavor impacted? What AQI level (amount of smoke in the area) are the negative impacts affecting grapes/vines?	AQI doesn't necessarily correlate to volatile phenols in the air. It's more about proximity to the fire.
3	How comparable is the chamber smoke treatment data to natural fire situations?	It's comparable for fires burning very close to the vineyard. We're continuing discussions on this topic.
4	What is the anticipated demand for pre-harvest smoke taint analysis in grapes? Can infrastructure meet that demand?	While we can't give sample numbers, more labs now offer this testing than in 2020, and capacity has increased since then.
5	What is "correct sanitation" for a barrel to be reused without issue?	Likely hot water and ozone, per Anita's lab. For full cleaning regime, please submit via the Task Force website.
6	Any difference from normal barrel cleaning procedures for smoke-affected wines?	Anita's lab did this experiment—submit the question via the Task Force site and we'll get the information.
7	Does baseline data vary by location and vintage?	We will release information by variety and vintage, and by state (not specific site, per confidentiality agreements).

Questions submitted during the 2025 WCSETF Summit

8	Is there data on yeast types impacting baseline phenol levels?	Within <i>S. cerevisiae</i> , differences are small. Non- <i>Sacch</i> yeasts (e.g., studied by Chris Curtin) may have greater glycosidase activity—work is ongoing.
9	Are sensory thresholds compounded in wine (e.g., guaiacol + cresols)?	Yes—thresholds in mixtures are known to be different, but it depends on the compounds. Data from our recent study is being interpreted.
10	Is there research on how glycosides translate to volatile phenols when liberated?	See Singh et al. (2011) and Noestheden papers. We're also working on hydrolysis but not ready to publish.
11	Are smoke markers synergistic in how they present ashiness?	Potentially. Two current studies are exploring this. Results expected in the next few months.
12	If 5% of consumers detect an impact, how meaningful is that to producers?	Be cautious with that conclusion—consumer work was done in NZ with 50–100 people. 5% = 5 people. Generalization across markets is premature. Context, wine type, and quality all factor into impact.
13	Is Pinot Noir more resistant to smoke taint?	No. Pinot Noir is quite susceptible.
14	Any colleagues in BC working on baselines?	Wesley Zandberg has done past work, but unclear if he's still active. No recent published data found.
15	What does BET stand for in results?	Best Estimate Threshold—one of several methods used to calculate sensory detection thresholds.
16	Best practices for sanitizing barrels previously used with smoke-tainted wines (e.g., steam vs. SO ₂)?	Anita's lab tested this—submit via the Task Force site for specific results.
17	Will industry have access to baseline studies and mixtures data?	We're working to post studies on the Task Force website. Much research is open-access or shareable after one year.

18	What is the concentration of Bentonite or Kaolin used?	Used 0.5 lb/gal, the recommended standard rate for Surround (kaolin) for other purposes. Testing of other rates is planned.
19	Can you comment on EMP spray?	No trials with EMP have been conducted yet by this team. Anita's lab has tested some materials and may have data.
20	Recommended timing for rinsing Kaolin or Bentonite after smoke?	Still under study. At 7 days post-smoke, sprays still showed reduction. Timing of removal to be investigated further.
21	Any data on how glycosylated phenols convert to free phenols over time?	Singh et al. (2011) addressed this. Follow-up work was done by Zandberg's lab at UBC. See also Noestheden papers.