



## **New York Sustainable Winegrowing 2026 Vineyard Certification Contract**

### **Terms and Conditions of Certification**

The New York Sustainable Winegrowing Program provides vineyards with official recognition for agricultural practices that are modeled after international standards of sustainable production utilizing the latest update to the VineBalance workbook (VineBalance 2026).

The NYWGF Sustainability Program provides all training and forms necessary for successful program participation. Growers are asked to complete a self-assessment using the VineBalance workbook, followed by a site visit from an authorized Vineyard Auditor to perform third-party verification. Audits take place annually until certification is achieved. Once a vineyard is certified, Audits are conducted every third year.

### **Application Process and Inspection Program for New York Sustainable Winegrowing**

1. Growers perform an annual VineBalance self-assessment.
2. Growers create action plans for low scoring items
3. Growers review their VineBalance self-assessment with an authorized Vineyard Inspector.
4. Vineyards are audited annually for third-party verification until certification is achieved.
5. Vineyards are audited every third year for recertification after initial certification is achieved.
6. Growers verify that all required farm records are true, complete, and available for evaluation.
7. Score adjustments made by the Vineyard auditor will be discussed on-site with Grower.
8. Growers reserve the right to appeal score adjustments to the Sustainability program Manager.
9. In the event of a failed audit, a letter will be sent to the Grower stating they can appeal within 30 days for a review. The Sustainability Program Manager would then have 30 days to respond to the grower.

### **Fees and Assessments for Vineyard Certification**

The New York Sustainable Winegrowing Vineyard Certification process is currently subsidized fully by the NYWGF. In the future, we anticipate that some costs of inspection may be shared by

the participant in the form of an annual participation fee, amount yet to be determined. Fees must be paid in order to maintain certification once implemented.

Audits will take place on a rolling basis from February 1 through April 30, 2026. Growers who pass the audit will be certified if all requirements of the program have been satisfied.

In the event that a Vineyard Inspector is not able to verify a passing score and determines a “No Pass,” a letter will be sent to the grower stating they can appeal within 30 days for a review. The Sustainability Program Manager would then have 30 days to respond to the grower.

**As a grower participating in the NYWGF Sustainability Program, I agree with and understand the following conditions of vineyard certification:**

- Participant acknowledges and accepts the rules and guidelines of the organization.
- Participant agrees to supply a complete set of required farm records on the provided forms.
- Participant will refrain from the misuse of any certificates or logos provided by the program.
- Participant agrees to allow Vineyard Inspectors access to the farm and infrastructures.
- Participant acknowledges that this application is for participation and does not guarantee certification, which is dependent upon successful completion of the program requirements.
- Participant agrees to pay any fees required by New York Sustainable Winegrowing.
- Participant agrees to receive communication from the New York Wine and Grape foundation.

**Penalties for Violation of Contract or Rules**

It is the intent of the NYWGF Sustainability Program to certify vineyards that have complied with the program. The success of the NYWGF Sustainability Program relies on strict adherence to the philosophy and rules of the program. Site audits, review of required farm records, and periodic sampling are the basis for assuring the public that members certified by the NYWGF Sustainability Program have complied with all aspects of the program. In order to gain the public's trust, the following list of sanctions will be followed and will be applied for violations or failure of members to meet program requirements and may result in immediate loss of membership and withdrawal of certification:

- Willful misuse of certification labels and certificates
- Willful misstatements of any farm records
- Willful misrepresentation of the NYWGF Sustainability Program
- Non-payment of fees within 60 days of invoice date
- Any actions of fraud or violation of the mutual trust between the grower and NYWGF