The Virginia grape and wine industries have experienced dramatic growth from the 1970's to the present date, and the state had 275 wineries in July 2013. Also in 2013, Virginia wineries and vineyards and their related activities had a $750 million impact on the state’s economy. Comparatively, Virginia ranks fifth nationally in number of wineries and is the sixth largest wine grape producer. Nevertheless, the production of Virginia wine relies heavily on the ability to grown in-state wine grapes. This is particularly important because, the industry has been constrained by shortages in local grape production, which may preclude future growth.

Virginia Tech University and the Virginia Cooperative Extension has offered recommendations and resources for the industry through this period of growth. In order to asses the public value of this work and evaluate the economic impacts of educational outreach, an online survey was developed and administered to the member of the Virginia Vineyards Association, which includes 305 grape growers. This study first analyzes demographic information of the respondents, and summarizes other important statistical information gathered through the survey. Additionally, the impacts of these educational programs, in terms of time and money savings, are quantified. Furthermore, survey results support the case that these programs have contributed to the increase in grape production in the Virginia.

An ordered logit regression was estimated to identify the characteristics of those growers who have benefited the most from these programs. Empirical findings reveal that larger grape producers and those with higher levels of viticulture training tend to benefit less from these programs. Growers that are also commercial wine producers are also less likely to benefit from the programs. On the other hand, growers located closer to the Agricultural Experimental Station (where the programs are delivered), and those with more working experience are more likely to benefit from these viticultural educational programs. In order to test the parallel regression hypothesis for individual variables, one Wald test developed by Brant (1990) and a likelihood ratio test were used. Both tests confirm the robustness of the results and show that the parallel regression hypothesis was not violated. The results of this study confirm the economic value of the Viticulture education programs offered to Virginia grape growers. More educated and better trained grape producers will likely increase the quality and quantity of locally produced grapes, which in turn will help the industry growth. Lastly, findings of this study may be applicable to
other wine producing regions in the United States in where there is need for viticulture educational programs.