Study: Wine may help control type 2 diabetes

By Allison Aubrey, NPR

If you're in the habit of drinking wine with dinner, there may be a bonus beyond the enjoyment of sipping a glass at night.

A study published in the Annals of Internal Medicine adds to the evidence that drinking a moderate amount of wine can be good for your health. The evidence comes from a two-year-long study on people with diabetes.

Researcher Iris Shai of Ben Gurion University says in Israel and elsewhere, lots of people with diabetes get the message that alcohol – even in moderation – can be harmful.

Shai found that compared to people who drank mineral water with dinner, the wine drinkers – both those who drank white and red – benefited from improvements in blood sugar control.

Read the whole story

Airlines upgrading wine cellars to woo passengers

By Elin McCoy, Bloomberg Markets

This past spring, Joost Heymeijer arrived in Bordeaux with the Emirates airline wine team for a four-day marathon of tasting barrel samples. They ended up purchasing almost 1 million bottles as futures, zeroing in on 60 famed crus classés, such

as Château Cheval Blanc. When the wines are ready to drink, they'll be poured gratis in Emirates' first and business classes.

"A long journey looks a lot better with a glass of fine Bordeaux or champagne," says Heymeijer, who's in charge of the airline's in-flight catering. "That's why we've spent half a billion dollars on the wine program over the past decade."

Emirates is one of many airlines adding elite wines to the list of luxury perks like massage beds and Michelin-starred cuisine as a long-term strategy to win wealthy travelers' loyalty.

Read the whole story

Food-wine tourism expanding in Placer County

By Sonya Sorich, Sacramento Business Journal

The farm-to-fork movement is growing – just ask the founders of a tourism company.

Fork 'N Road Productions launched this month and will offer events, educational seminars and tours centered on food, wine and craft beer in Placer County.

Currently in its first phase, the company is holding upcoming events such as a brewers' roundtable and a beer and wine dinner. Early next year, owners expects to expand the offerings to include area tours with a food-and-drink focus.

Read the whole story

K’s Kitchen: Turning zucchini into pesto

By Kathryn Reed

I remember when I lived in Sonoma County and had a prolific garden. Zucchini plants seemed to take over the area, producing so much squash some ended up in the compost pile. I couldn’t even give them away after a while.

I wish I had the recipe below back then. It’s a perfect use for this summer, and early autumn vegetable. And with being able to find zucchini in the grocery store year-round, it’s a recipe that is multi-seasonal.

Using yellow and green zucs will add a little color.

Be sure to taste the pesto before tossing it with the pasta to make sure it has enough flavor. More garlic, red pepper or salt may be needed because zucchinis are bland.

Other nuts could be used. When pine nuts weren’t so expensive that is what I made regular pesto with. Now walnuts are my go-to choice. Roasted almonds would also be good in this dish. I was being lazy and didn’t chop any walnuts as a garnish, but I would recommend doing so if serving to others. It will look better and provide more texture.



Pasta with Zucchini Pesto

1 C walnuts

Olive oil

5 garlic cloves, chopped

½ tsp crushed red pepper

3 medium zucchini (1½ pounds), half cut into matchsticks and the remainder chopped

Salt and pepper

1 lb. spaghetti

2 tsp lemon zest

1½ C Pecorino Romano, grated; plus more for serving

½ C chopped mint, plus more for garnish

In a large skillet coated with olive oil cook garlic and crushed red pepper over medium heat for about 1 minute. Add the chopped zucchini, season with salt and pepper, cook until lightly golden. Put this mixture into food processor or blender, add walnuts and blend. If needed, add olive oil. Season with salt and pepper.

Cook spaghetti until al dente. Reserve 1 cup of the pasta

water, then drain. Return the pasta to the hot pot (but with burner off), add pasta water, pesto, zucchini matchsticks, lemon zest, cheese and mint. Stir until mixed well.

Garnish with mint and chopped walnuts. Extra cheese may be served on the side.

K’s Kitchen: Veggie lasagna worthy of a party

By Kathryn Reed

It needs something.

That was the conclusion Steve, Denise and I came to after I first made the original recipe. My sister, Pam, came up with the somethings. She increased the amount of all the spices and added mozzarella, which is what the recipe below calls for.

Zucchini isn’t one of the most flavorful vegetables, so it is always going to need something to give it a bit of pizzazz. This veggie does have nutritional benefits – such as not having many calories, and being a good source for potassium and anti-oxidants.

Using a mix of yellow and green zucchini makes the dish look prettier. And no need to barbecue if you don’t want to. The oven works fine; the char will be missing and there will be a slightly different flavor. Frozen corn could also be substituted for fresh if it’s not in season.

It’s also possible to assemble these a couple days before baking/serving. This is what my sister did for my birthday bash.



Zucchini and Corn Lasagna

3½ pounds green zucchini and yellow squash, ends trimmed, thinly sliced lengthwise

1¾ tsp kosher salt, divided

3 T olive oil, divided

½ C shallot, chopped

7 garlic cloves, chopped

2 C raw corn kernels (from 2 or 3 ears corn)

2 tsp fresh thyme

15 ounces ricotta cheese

8 ounces mozzarella, grated

1¼ C shredded Parmesan cheese, divided

1 large egg, beaten to blend

½ C basil leaves, chopped

4 T chives, chopped

½ tsp pepper

1½ T butter, divided

Place zucchini in a single layer on baking sheets that are lined with paper towel. Sprinkle with 1½ tsp salt. Let sit for 30 minutes.

Heat 1 T oil in a medium pan over medium heat. Add shallot and garlic, stirring until beginning to brown. Add corn and thyme until corn is just hot. Transfer to a medium bowl. Stir in ricotta, half of Parmesan, mozzarella, egg, basil, chives, pepper, and remaining salt.

Press water out of zucchini with paper towels. Brush zucchini with remaining oil. Grill zucchini until grill marks appear on both sides.

Grease 9 x 13 pan. Arrange a quarter of zucchini crosswise in -bottom of dish, overlapping slightly. Evenly spread one-third of corn-cheese mixture over zucchini. Repeat process 2 more times, ending with zucchini. Sprinkle remaining Parmesan on top and dot with remaining butter.

Bake in 375-degree oven until lasagna turns golden brown, about 45 minutes. Let rest before serving.

Health benefits found in white wine



Studies show white wine may be beneficial to one's health. Photo Copyright 2015 Carolyn E. Wright

By Ariana Eunjung Cha, Washington Post

Throughout the years scientists have documented the benefits of red wine – for heart health, cholesterol control and possibly even cancer prevention – in numerous studies. But what about its cousin, the white kind?

The short answer is that the evidence supporting white wine's health benefits, while still limited, is growing. While previous studies on the elixir have been mostly focused on testing in animals or on testing the components of the drink itself, scientists have recently reported on two randomized clinical trials that found good news for white wine enthusiasts.

The first study, called In Vino Veritas (In Wine, Truth) involved tracking 146 subjects half of whom drank pinot noir, and half of whom drank a white chardonnay-pinot over a year. The researchers reported at a European Society of Cardiology meeting last year that those who worked out twice per week and drank wine – either kind – saw a significant improvement in cholesterol levels.

Read the whole story

Craft beer brewers balance drafts and drought

By Julie Watson, AP

FALLBROOK – Amid severe drought, the water board in this Southern California town imposed restrictions on Fallbrook Brewing Co., just as the tiny brewer doubled capacity to meet demand for its craft beers.

To cut monthly water use by about 10 percent, owner Chuck McLaughlin bought an extra 310-gallon tank to catch water used in the brewing process to reuse it for cleaning equipment. His new brewhouse includes a chiller that uses two-thirds less water than his old one.

As a small business, there's no extra money to pay potentially thousands in fines if he exceeds the limit.

So far, "it's been very close," said McLaughlin, whose brewery is run out of a former consignment shop in Fallbrook, a town of 30,000 people about 60 miles north of San Diego.

California has more craft breweries – small, independent beer makers that use traditional ingredients – than any other state. More than 570 are in operation and another 240 are slated to open, according to the California Craft Brewers Association. Craft breweries contributed $6.5 billion to the state economy last year alone, producing 3.5 million barrels.

A typical craft brewery uses up to 7 gallons of water to make 1 gallon of beer. Some in California have decreased that ratio to less than 5-to-1, but they are still being asked to cut back to meet the state mandate, which aims for California's

overall urban water use to go down by 25 percent when compared with 2013.

No other state in the drought-plagued West has taken such action.

Breweries are digging wells, installing wastewater treatment plants and seeking exemptions from local water boards that control water use and can impose fines. Some are shelving planned expansions.

If Mother Nature doesn’t bring significant showers and snowstorms this fall and winter, some breweries may be forced to leave the state.

Sierra Nevada Brewing Co. and other established California breweries, such as Stone Brewing Co., recently opened plants on the East Coast. But they say the motive was not the drought but to cut transportation costs to those markets.

Still, “a lot of brewers are looking to open up new breweries and a lot of them have concerns over water availability in the state of California,” said Cheri Chastain, Sierra Nevada’s sustainability manager. “Drought has the potential to move a lot in the industry outside the state or prevent it from growing.”

Officials in the city of Chico told Sierra Nevada this spring to drop its water use by 32 percent. The nation’s largest private craft brewery already had cut its usage by 25 percent and said further cuts would hurt production. The local water board agreed to exempt the water it uses to produce beer and asked Sierra Nevada to work toward reducing water used for its restaurant and landscaping by 42 percent.

Bear Republic Brewing Co. has taken some of the most drastic measures. The company last year pulled out of 15 U.S. markets and four countries after the Northern California town of Cloverdale informed the brewery it did not have enough water

to sustain it.

But instead of moving, Bear Republic spent $466,000 to dig two wells for the town of 9,000 residents. It spent an additional $4 million on its own water treatment system, which uses electrically active microbes to purify wastewater, allowing the brewery to recycle up to 25 percent of the water it uses for equipment cleaning.

“We have to make sure to protect our future, not only for the community but for our 157 employees who have a home here — just packing up and leaving would be devastating to them,” owner Richard R. Norgrove Sr. said.

But he adds: “We also have to look to the outside world to see where we’re going to build our long-term growth if we can’t do it here.”

That could mean building a second plant where there is ample water.

Stone Brewing Co. in Escondido is spending $1 million on expanding its $8 million wastewater treatment system installed in 2008 and aims to use only 3 gallons of water for every gallon of beer it produces.

“We don’t have any prediction on what’s coming down, and we don’t want to get penalized,” said Pat Tiernan, chief operating officer.

Tiny breweries like Fallbrook Brewing Co. can’t afford those options.

McLaughlin could find relief by moving his brewery to the neighboring city of Oceanside, whose water reduction target is 20 percent — compared with 36 percent for the town of Fallbrook. Each district’s reduction target is based on how much water that district used per person in 2013.

But like many craft brewers, McLaughlin believes the local

community is what makes his beers stand out.

No stranger to water woes, the town was depicted in Frank Capra's 1952 film, "The Fallbrook Story," about ranchers fighting the federal government over water rights to a nearby river.

Today it is best known for its annual avocado festival, where children outfit avocados with tiny wheels to race them in the "Avo 500." One of his brewery's most popular ales is a saison infused with local avocado-blossom honey.

"'Be social. Drink local.' That's our motto," he said. "We wouldn't consider moving outside of Fallbrook. We'll just pray for rain – maybe hire a rain dancer."

Pumpkin-pie shortage looming because of rain

By Megan Durisin and Linly Lin, Bloomberg Business

Want a trading tip? Go long canned pumpkin.

That's the advice from the owner of Libby's, the largest U.S. producer, after record summer rains damaged this year's pumpkin crop. Yields in Illinois, the center of American production, are down about 50 percent from 2014, according to Nestle SA, Libby's parent company.

Libby's, which ordinarily produces 80 percent of canned pumpkin in the U.S., will this year make enough to bake about 45 million 8-inch pumpkin pies, half of what it originally planned.

Read the whole story

Dietary guidelines won’t include sustainability

By Gabrielle Canon, Mother Jones

When the USDA’s Dietary Guidelines are released later this year, they’re sure to make waves in the nation’s food economy. Updated every five years, the rules—the government’s official line on what Americans should eat to stay healthy—inform decisions on everything from agricultural subsidies to government food assistance programs to school lunch.

But there’s one thing the new guidelines won’t touch: the health of our environment.

In a statement posted Tuesday on the USDA website, Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack and Health and Human Services Secretary Sylvia Burwel announced that the guidelines will not include recommendations about how to choose foods with the lightest impact on the planet. The dietary guidelines, they wrote, are not “the appropriate vehicle for this important policy conversation.”

Read the whole story

Sugar-syrup showdown headed for court

By Edvard Pettersson, Michelle Cortez and Shruti Singh, BloombergBusiness

Big Sugar and Big Syrup are heading for a showdown.

After years of bickering, U.S. sugar companies and their rivals, the makers of high-fructose corn syrup, are going to trial over what exactly constitutes a “natural” sweetener.

Big Sugar argues high-fructose corn syrup doesn’t qualify. Big Syrup, predictably, disagrees.

Billions of dollars are at stake. But this legal dispute masks a bitter reality for both sides: Americans are consuming less sugar and corn syrup than they used to. Nutritionists agree with what parents have been telling kids for a long time: too many sweets are bad for you.

Read the whole story