

Luke's Mechanical Thinning Trial Results
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The first of the off-station mechanical thinning trials was harvested yesterday afternoon at the Luke's vineyard in North East, PA. The experiment compared control rows with rows mechanically thinned approximately 30 days after bloom (Concord, single high-wire cordon training, 9 foot row and 8 foot vine spacing). Thinning had a significant effect on both yield and brix. On average, the check vines had 13.6 tons/acre at 13.1 brix and the thinned vines had 8.8 tons/acre at 14.6 brix (see figures). Therefore, we had to remove approximately 3 to 3.2 tons/acre to increase the crop by 1 degree brix (see regression figure). This data is consistent with what we have recorded at the vineyard lab on hand thinned vines during this slow ripening season. On an even more practical note, it is interesting to show that some of the processors are accepting Concord grapes at 13.5 degrees brix. In this particular trial, mechanical thinning produced grapes of acceptable maturity for that particular market. Unthinned vines will have to hang longer to reach acceptable juice soluble solids and run the risk of not making it into the plant. Rick Dunst and I would like to thank the Luke Family for their cooperation on this project.

