PERCEPTION OF THE CONCEPT OF SUSTAINABILITY IN WINERIES PRODUCING VALLE D'AOSTA DOC

Andrea Dal Vecchio(1), Alessio Marco Lazzari(1), Danielle Borra(1), Silvia Guidoni(1), Stefano Massaglia(1)

(1) Dipartimento di Scienze Agrarie, Forestali e Alimentari, Università di Torino, Largo P. Braccini, 2 - 10095 Grugliasco (To) Italy
Corresponding author: andrea.dalvecchio@unito.it

Abstract

The main scope of this research has been to investigate what values are attributed to the concept of “sustainability” by the wine producers situated in Aosta Valley that produce the "Valle d'Aosta DOC" in all its many sub-denominations.

The Aosta Valley area planted with vines lies almost entirely in the central valley crossed by the Dora Baltea river, which Donnas climbs in less than 90 km up to 1.200 meters of Morgex.

Currently there are 1.333 vineyards in the Aosta Valley that grow on an area of about 460 ha.

Despite the modest acreage for vineyard, the Aosta Valley has a rich heritage of grapes, consisting of thirteen native varieties, twelve of which red grape and only one white grape. To protect the quality and distinctiveness of regional wine production, there is a single DOC "Valle d' Aosta - Vallée d'Aoste" contemplating twenty wines.

The wines included in the only regional DOC are widespread throughout the region: the disciplinary divides wine production in seven sub-denominations of the area (the Blanc de Morgex et de La Salle, the Enfer d’Arvier, the Torrette, the Nus, the Chambave, the Arnad-Monjovet and the Donnas) and 15 sub-denominations of grape variety (Chardonnay, Cornalin, Fumin, Gamay, Mayolet, Merlot, Muller Thurgau, Nebbiolo, Petite Arvine, Petit Rouge, Pinot Blanc, Pinot Gris, Pinot Noir, Premetta and Syrah).

In the present work, sustainability has been assessed under three criteria:
• environmental (choice of farming techniques for the vineyard, adoption of environmental certifications and best practices, defence of vineyard biodiversity and landscape preservation);
• socio-economic (type of business conduction, type of work contracts, forms of remuneration for the grapes, relations with professional associations).

• productive (estimate of emissions generated during the production processes and, in the case of the carbon footprint, during the product’s life cycle).

The inquiry has been conducted through face to face interviews with members of a selected group of wine firms, wine cooperatives and other producers located in the investigated territories with the objective of evaluating the existence between their distinct categories of relevant differences in the perception and interpretation of the concept of sustainability.

The processing of the obtained data has noticed the coexistence of different forms of judgment and sensitivity toward the analysed subject. At the same time it has been observed a non homogeneous perception of the value of “sustainability” in the different fields investigated due to the lack of an univocal definition of the same concept of “sustainability” in the wine sector.

Therefore “sustainability” could be influenced effectively by the territorial context in which the producer operates and could substantially reinforce both the image of Aosta Valley wines and their terroir of production, intercepting that growing segment of final consumers who uses the attributes related to the sustainability of a wine as a discriminating element of their purchasing choice.