

## Padua 2017 Abstract Submission

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### Keywords

certification; labelling; wine;

### Research Question

The objective is to investigate through a descriptive approach the drivers and barriers behind the decision to apply for a sustainable production program in the Italian wine sector

### Methods

The present analysis uses direct structured interviews and a tailor-made online survey to focus on the sustainability initiatives of our sample of nine wineries.

### Results

The preliminary results suggest that companies to be sustainable consider the importance about the proper use of agricultural chemical products, followed by biodiversity preservation and proper water management.

### Abstract

#### Introduction

In 2011 the Italian Ministry for the Environment, Land and Sea has launched the National pilot project "VIVA - La sostenibilità nella vitivinicoltura in Italia" (in English, VIVA Sustainability and Culture"). The purpose of the project is to improve the performance of sustainability in vineyards and wine production through the development of a certification system, based on the use of four indicators: Air, Water, Territory and Vineyard.

The indicators evaluate the impact of wine production taking into account the three pillars of sustainability (Corbo et al., 2014). The indicator "Air" provides the guideline allows Italian wine companies to adopt the ISO TS 14067 to account the greenhouse gas emissions directly and indirectly related to the life cycle of a bottle of wine of 0.75 litres (Ravaglia, 2016). "Water" reveals the total volume of fresh consumed and polluted water both referred to company activities or to the production of a wine bottle (Lamastra et al., 2014). "Vineyard" takes into account the agronomic management practices in the vineyards (use of pesticides and their effect on water bodies and soils, soil management practices, fertility and biodiversity issues (Lamastra et al., 2016). "Territory" is a kit of qualitative and quantitative indicators, built in order to evaluate the actions undertaken by the companies and their impact on the territory. The results of the sustainability assessment are communicated to the consumers with a label (available through internet or smartphone/tablet) that summarizes the results and improvements, in terms of sustainability, achieved by the wine companies.

The pilot phase, conducted with the scientific collaboration of OPERA (the Research Centre for Sustainable

Agriculture of the Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore), involved a number of major Italian wineries, which were selected based on their geographical location and their products. This phase was completed in 2014 and led to the definition of technical specifications for sustainable wine production, that now serve as a reference for companies who want to achieve the validation foreseen by the project. At the moment, about 24 companies have joined the program; 18 products from 16 companies have been. The objective of this research is to investigate through a descriptive approach the drivers and barriers behind the decision to apply for a sustainable production program in the Italian wine sector awarded with the label.

To reach this aim the authors carried out an explorative analysis of a group of wineries involved in "VIVA - Sustainability and Culture", as it is one of the most important sustainability initiatives in the Italian context.

#### Method

The present analysis uses direct structured interviews and a tailor-made online survey to focus on the sustainability initiatives of our sample of wineries, involving representatives for each company (usually the person responsible to implement the sustainability practices). The interviews were carried out in August-September 2016. The online survey was sent via email to twenty-four companies which have been previously contacted by the researchers telephonically and by email. Nine out of twenty-four expressed interest in the study, providing useful information for the coherent development of the analysis. Following previous studies (Borsellino et al., 2016), the questionnaire included open-ended questions, closed-ended and 5-point Likert scale questions (1-not important, 5-extremely important).

At the beginning of the questionnaire general information was asked about the company (e.g. name, annual wine production, distribution channels and size), then more specific questions about the sustainable certification (e.g. the number of bottled labeled with the VIVA logo) and finally how the winery applied the sustainable approach (e.g. sustainable practices involved, reasons for their adoption, changes, costs and benefits). We also intended to study the communication strategies and vision about sustainability issues undertaken by the companies in the sample.

The questionnaire allowed the collection of data referring to the year 2015. The main points were related to understand what motivations (e.g. ethical, environmental, economic) drive people (companies) to take a sustainability path and more in specific the VIVA program.

#### Results

The preliminary results suggest that companies to be sustainable consider the importance about the proper use of agricultural chemical products (e.g. fertilizers), which is followed by biodiversity preservation (strictly connected) and proper water management and the optimization of energy consumption. On the other hand, attributes which are considered less important are related to a lower packaging use or the replacement of normal packaging with recyclable or recycled materials for the wine products.

Companies are also aware the implementation and communication (e.g. advertising) about the sustainability initiative can be an added value and a tool to differentiate themselves with respect to competitors. Some of the sample believe that the sustainable labelling in a wine bottle can give an easier access to international markets. Participation in national (e.g. Vinitaly) and international wine trade fairs is considered important by half of companies included in the study.

On the other hand, one of the main complications for the companies to be engaged in the sustainability initiative are the difficulties of data collection and calculation about sustainability inputs. Moreover, also the implementation costs have been identified as a strong barrier; however this aspect depends on the type of certification and size of the company.

Suggestions on how to improve the sustainability programmes have been asked to the company and it seems there is a need to better offer a support to online sales through the creation of an e-commerce platform.

Final and more elaborated results will be available upon the acceptance of this abstract.

#### Conclusion

The results of our study concern wineries involved in a sustainability initiative in Italy. Main conclusions suggest that adopting sustainable approach and be part of a common programme has its benefits and drawbacks.

In theory, the implementation of VIVA programme should lead to an improvement in business efficiencies and management systems. However, this outcome mainly depends on the size and structure of the company.

Moreover, most of the respondents have experienced only few years with the certification, suggesting the need of a longer period of time to understand the potential benefits, reduce costs and optimizing the resources.

## Essential bibliography

Borsellino V, Asciuto A, D'Acquisto M, Di Franco C.P, Migliore G, Schimmenti E (2016). Sustainability initiatives and experiences in the Sicilian wine industry *Rivista di Economia Agraria*, Anno LXXI, n. 1, 2016: 67-81

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## **TITLE: Drivers and barriers behind sustainability programme in the Italian wine sector**

**Giovanni Sogari, Chiara Corbo, Eleonora Carini**

### **Introduction**

In 2011 the Italian Ministry for the Environment, Land and Sea has launched the National pilot project “VIVA – La sostenibilità nella vitivinicoltura in Italia” (in English, VIVA Sustainability and Culture”). The purpose of the project is to improve the performance of sustainability in vineyards and wine production through the development of a certification system, based on the use of four indicators: Air, Water, Territory and Vineyard.

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The pilot phase, conducted with the scientific collaboration of OPERA (the Research Centre for Sustainable Agriculture of the Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore), involved a number of major Italian wineries, which were selected based on their geographical location and their products. This phase was completed in 2014 and led to the definition of technical specifications for sustainable wine production, that now serve as a reference for companies who want to achieve the validation foreseen by the project. At the moment, about 24 companies have joined the program; 18 products from 16 companies have been. The objective of this research is to investigate through a descriptive approach the drivers and barriers behind the decision to apply for a sustainable production program in the Italian wine sector awarded with the label.

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