"THE LANDSCAPE BENEFITS or A MOUNTAIN VITICULTURE"
Geremia GIOS, Giorgio DE ROS
University of Trento, Italy

ABSTRACT
The Valle di Cembra is a By-valley of the Valle dell’Adige and follows the course of the torrent Avisio for 30 Km or thereabouts. In an area of approximately 100 sq. Km reside 11 small municipalities for a total amount of little over 9,000 inhabitants.

In 7 of these municipalities, placed between 500 and 800 m above sea level, it is traditionally practiced a viticulture characterized by the high gradient of the ground. As a matter of fact, the vineyards have generally an incline of more than 20 per cent and reaches sometimes a maximum level of 75 per cent.

The 1990 general census of agriculture has counted 1150 farms with vineyard for a total of 633 hectares. Thus the average farm vineyard surface is about 0.5 hectares.

Consequently only few vine-growers can follow their activity in a professional way. So just 192 viticultural farms of Valle di Cembra count at least a farmer enrolled in the provincial register of agrarian entrepreneurs. The majority (162) counts only farmers of the second Section of the register: i.e. the main part of their earned incomes does not derive from agricultural activities.

As in many other cases in the Alps, the future or this “difficult” viticulture seems endangered. The decrease of vine prices, actually, makes not much profitable the high work inputs required by the steep vineyards.

That causes some cases of disaffection. For instance, in Valle di Cembra for every member of the family working in the farm, there are about 3.1 who do not work. The average ratio of the whole province of Trento is 1 to 2.4. Many people are attracted by the higher wages offered by the porphyry quarrying or by the manufactories situated in the Valle dell’Adige.

But the abandoning of viticulture, although at an initial stage and less pronounced as in other mountain viticultures in Italy, would cause, if confirmed, a heavy damage to a traditional and appreciated feature of the landscape of the province of Trento.

It is well known that landscape amenity is a public good. Because of, among other things, the impossibility to exclude anybody from the consumption, the market system cannot price it. On the other hand, a fierce economic competition leads to the indiscriminate exploitation of environmental resources.

The usual response of public opinion is the request of posing bonds in land use. But when, as in this case, the maintenance of countryside amenity needs an active behaviour of the subjects involved, this way appears rather inefficient. It is instead important to pay the landscape benefits rendered by the mountain viticulture.

We dispose of various techniques for estimating scientific benefits. Most of them rely to the more general concept of externalities: some are based on a compared transposition of observed market behaviour (travel cost, hedonic price), while others are concerned with hypothetical valuations (contingent valuation, willingness to travel).

Also for the marked random assumptions on which they are based, many objections were recently posed towards the methods of "direct" valuation. Instead, more interest has aroused the use of aesthetic-visual indexes, which do not involve, at least at a first stage, direct attribution of monetary value. The relative scales of ordinal type resulting from such indexes, although very useful in some comparative procedures, for instance the Environmental Impact Valuation, are nevertheless insufficient as regards to the obtaining a money quantification of landscape externalities.

The aim of the present note is to propose an alternative approach focused on the joined production of food and landscape services, carried out in certain agricultural systems. By assuming a social demand of rural recreation, as proved by the most recent EC directives, the comparison between the production functions of viticultures of different scenic worth permits to value the landscape benefits of the Valle di Cembra viticulture.