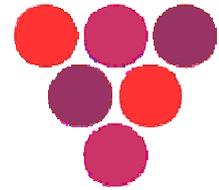




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The Integration of Disease Resistant Grape Varieties in the Organic Wine Industry: the case of German Wine Producers **Philip SLOAN, Willy LEGRAND, Karina KRAUSS**

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While the wine industry is generally not perceived as major environmental polluter, soil erosion, chemical pesticide and fertilizer usage in addition to ground water consumption result in consequential environmental impacts. Wine makers are faced with a double challenge: how to achieve necessary market penetration with their products while ensuring an adequate standard of living. In Germany, organically certified wine production has grown exponentially since the early 1990's. While organic consumption comprised in 2007 only three per cent (€ 5 million) of the entire German food and beverage market (Miersch, 2008), organic producers occupy a niche market that bears great potential (Wier & Calverley, 2002). Currently, 1,73% of the total cultivated area for the purpose of making wine in Germany is done so using organically certified methods (Ecovin, 2008).

At present, there is a paucity of literature in the field of disease resistant vine cultivars and the marketability of the wines that are being produced. Hence, the purpose of this paper is to provide an overview of the PIWI cultivars (the acronym PIWI is a short form from the German word pilzwiderstandsfähig literally translated as disease tolerant) in Germany with a particular interest in researching the current marketability. The study population was restricted to the owners of wineries which are members of ECOVIN, Germany's largest organic association representing 195 wineries as well as members of the Association of German Prädikat Wine Estates (Verband Deutscher Prädikatsweingüter, short VDP), representing 200 wineries, many of whom work with organic or biodynamic techniques. Findings of the survey provide a clear picture of the current positioning of PIWI cultivars in the market and provide hints on the steps necessary for the promotion and exchange of scientific and practical findings concerning disease tolerant grape cultivars nationally and internationally.

Key Words: Disease Tolerant Grape Cultivars Production Marketability