

Adoption and outcomes of sustainable winegrowing practices in NZ

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Transitions toward a sustainable society need changes at large spatial scales.

In agriculture, such changes might be challenged by the fragmented ownership of land by multiple farm enterprises with distinct economic situations, goals, practices and values.

Overview

Our research aimed to **identify success factors and barriers hindering sustainability program adoption**.

We focused specifically on the development of the 'Sustainable Winegrowing New Zealand' program (SWNZ), a pro-active approach managed by the national industry body 'New Zealand Winegrowers'.

Methods

21 face-to-face semi-structured interviews with NZ wine industry stakeholders and experts. Sample: people who are or were actively involved in developing SWNZ.

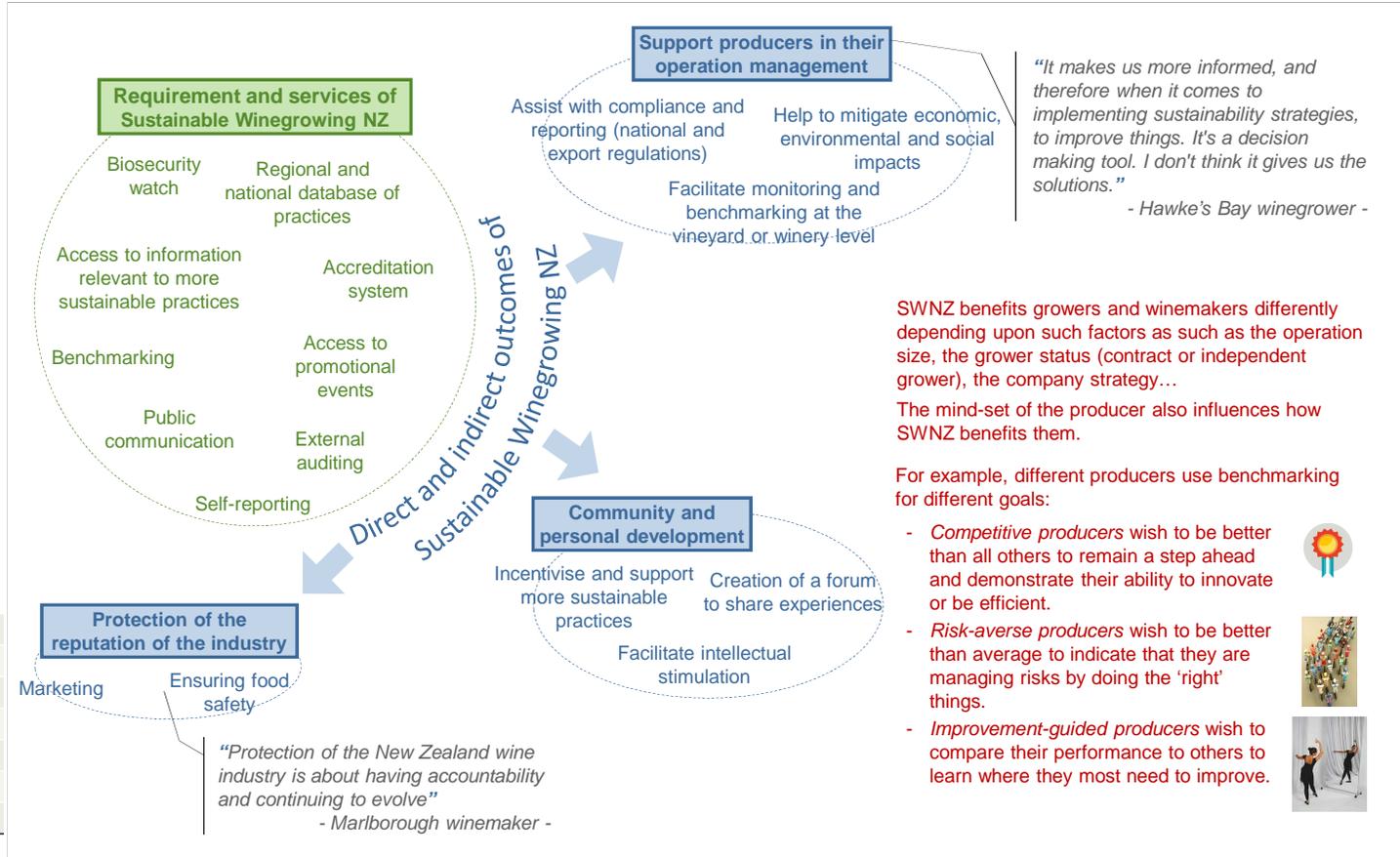
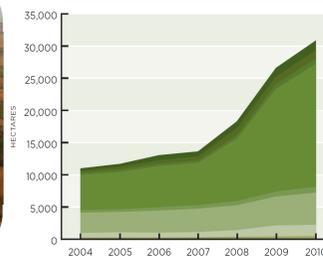
Some topics covered by the interview:

- Past changes in the industry
- The rationale behind the development of SWNZ
- Interviewee's definition of sustainability
- The impacts of SWNZ at the interviewee and industry level
- Future challenges for SWNZ

The NZ wine industry today

With a twenty year history of sustainability programmes and more than 94% of the winegrowing area certified by either 'Sustainable Winegrowing New Zealand' (SWNZ), or 'Organic'/'Biodynamic', the NZ wine industry is an important example of how sustainable production might be organised at the level of industry groups.

SWNZ VINEYARD AREA HA 2004-2010



SWNZ benefits growers and winemakers differently depending upon such factors as such as the operation size, the grower status (contract or independent grower), the company strategy...

The mind-set of the producer also influences how SWNZ benefits them.

For example, different producers use benchmarking for different goals:

- **Competitive producers** wish to be better than all others to remain a step ahead and demonstrate their ability to innovate or be efficient.
- **Risk-averse producers** wish to be better than average to indicate that they are managing risks by doing the 'right' things.
- **Improvement-guided producers** wish to compare their performance to others to learn where they most need to improve.

1995 - First year trial

With the assistance of David Jordan and government funding, the Swiss scorecard system was adapted to the NZ context and trialled by a group of five volunteer Hawke's Bay growers. All of whom were David Jordan's close collaborators. They met approximately once a month at each other's vineyards to review and improve the scorecards.

1997-2000

Expansion and institutionalisation

An increased number of growers were participating in the Integrated Winegrowing Program (IWP). A membership fee was implemented and administrative support was hired. The interviews suggest that many of the participants were larger companies.

2006 - Vision of 100% sustainable production

The growth in membership had stagnated (57% of the winegrowing area in 2003 reached just 60% in 2006) and the NZW board adopted the goal for the industry of achieving 100% accreditation of sustainability for NZ wine production by 2012. Participation in the NZW Awards and in NZW-sponsored wine tasting events became restricted to accredited members of Sustainable Winegrowing NZ.

2013 - 2017

New Zealand Winegrowers work with the New Zealand Sustainability Dashboard project to develop a sustainability assessment tool for the wine industry. Such a tool allows fast feedback to growers and reduce reporting and monitoring costs.

1996 Expanding the trial to other winegrowing regions

Around 120 growers in NZ volunteered to test and give feedback about the scorecard system.

2002- Rebranding and start of the winery program

The IWP was re-named **Sustainable Winegrowing New Zealand** and a logo was developed. Winery scorecards were developed and tested in over 10 wineries.

2010 - Mandatory compliance with external auditing standards

93% of vineyard area and 85% of wine production under Sustainable Winegrowing NZ.

2009 - Release of updated scorecards

Introduction of a new audit management tool which included updated scorecards. 85% of the producing area and winery accredited through Sustainable Winegrowing NZ.

1994 - Preliminary study on integrated production in Switzerland

The NZ Grapegrower Council and the Wine Institute of NZ commissioned a consultant, David Jordan, to evaluate options for integrated production systems in NZ. The two institutions were worried about the potentially detrimental impacts of food security scandals to the industry. After studying the Swiss integrated production system, David Jordan developed a project for the industry which aimed at adapting the scorecards used into the NZ context. At this time the idea was to provide tools to allow growers to improve their practices over time.

Ongoing challenges

Decreasing proportion of Category 1 wineries (< 1.2mL wine)

Ageing cohort of wine producers

Multiple understanding of sustainability

Sustainability