

**IS THERE A FUTURE FOR STEEP SLOPE WINE GROWING?
ANALYSING THE IMPORTANCE OF FACTORS INFLUENCING PRODUCERS'
WILLINGNESS TO GIVE UP STEEP SLOPE WINE PRODUCTION**

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Purpose

Viticulture in steep slopes is an important part of European viticultural heritage. Steep slope vineyards are under threat of diminishing due to the disadvantageous ratio between costs and revenue, despite subsidisation by the European Union. As a first exploratory research it is analysed what factors affect producers' willingness to give up steep slope wine production.

Methodology

Producers with steep slope viticulture were surveyed about production cost and marketing strategies of steep slope wines in an online questionnaire.

Findings

Identification with steep slope viticulture is found to be by far the strongest factor influencing producers' willingness to give up steep slope viticulture. The perceived inability to successfully reach consumers, market steep slope wines at higher prices and follow a sound marketing strategy significantly increase willingness to give up. Economic factors such as relative costs, estate size, relative share of steep slope acreage and regional opportunity to work in other industries were not found to have a significant impact.

Practical implications

To date research on the sustainability of steep slope cultivation focuses on economic factors, such as production costs and subsidies, as well as technical innovations enabling the mechanisation of steep slopes. This study shows that personal factors and perceived lack of marketing success are more strongly affecting producers willingness to give up steep slopes. Strategies to keep up steep slope viticulture should therefore stronger focus on approaches to support marketing of steep slope wines.