

## Social standards and quality in wine growing

Annie Sigwalt<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> ESA - Laboratoire de Sciences Sociales, Angers, France

a.sigwalt@groupe-esa.com

**Contribution appeared in Sylvander, B., Barjolle, D. and Arfini, F. (1999) (Eds.) “The Socio-Economics of Origin Labelled Products: Spatial, Institutional and Co-ordination Aspects”, proceedings of the 67<sup>th</sup> EAAE Seminar, pp. 423 - 424**

October 28-30, 1999

Le Mans, France



**INRA**  
SCIENCE & IMPACT



**UNIVERSITA' DEGLI  
STUDI DI PARMA**

*Copyright 1997 by Sigwalt. All rights reserved. Readers may make verbatim copies of this document for non-commercial purposes by any means, provided that this copyright notice appears on all such copies.*

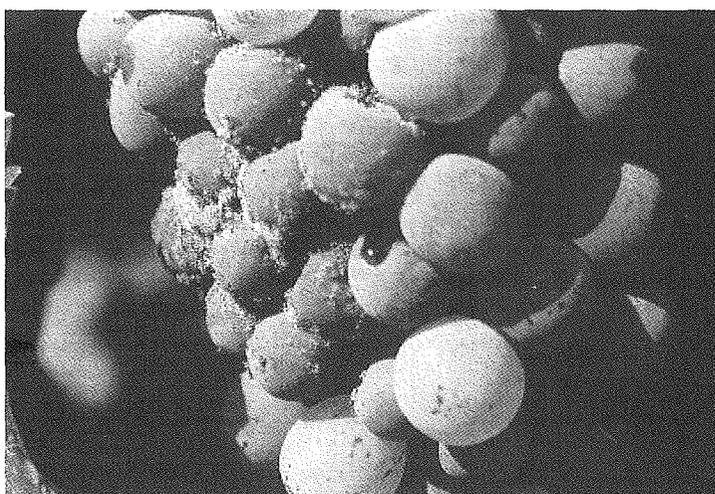


## SOME RESULTS

- Wine growers agree on a common capital of knowledge and practices, to set up their professional skills. But they are also the actors of individual or collective variants, and therefore in a position of contributing to changes in the local system of norms.
- Beyond technical considerations, when wine growers discuss using a grape-picking machine or not, the various ways of picking botrytis over-ripened grapes,

or the interest of considering the influence of the vine-plot in wine-making process, they will take into account whom the new proposals are coming from.

- Growers of *Coteaux du Layon* wines usually sell an important part of their production to private customers, and the contacts they have with them can be an important source for the evolution of their practices. To a certain extent, customers have an influence on quality standards, prices, and techniques.



*The action of Botrytis cinerea mould is encouraged to over-ripen the Chenin grape used in Coteaux du Layon wines.*

## CONCLUSION

Commercialising with an A.O.C. label is certainly an asset for the wine growers, considering the notoriety provided by its image. This quality sign is one of the steps towards a better identification of how typical a wine is. But, in our case, we can see that the

requirements which are in the decree of *Coteaux du Layon* remain below the quality level the wine growers fix for themselves and their colleagues through their discussions. Moreover, we can see the notion of quality changes throughout the years, denying the principle of "constancy" which founds the A.O.C. quality sign.