The Wine Authenticity Project
Call for Samples
June 2022

Determining the authenticity of food products has increased in importance, partly due to the increase in international trade, but also due to the increased pressure from counterfeiting, adulteration, and the response in protectionist regulations. Wine is no exception to this trend, and already there are "authenticating databases" in use, utilizing different chemical and statistical approaches.

Unfortunately, the quality of the databases can vary depending not just on the quality and type of instrumentation, but also on the quality and quantity of the samples used to construct and validate these databases.

There are authenticity databases in use by major European bodies which can, and have, been used to cast doubt on the authenticity of wines being imported from the United States. These models were developed using a limited number of American wines and there is little transparency on the robustness of the model.

To respond to this ongoing challenge, Wine Institute has partnered with Bruker Corporation and ETS Laboratories to develop a wine authenticity database, using Nuclear Magnetic Resonance spectroscopy (NMR) with the highest scientific rigor to protect the US wine industry not only from counterfeiting and adulteration, but also from authenticity models which may not provide the level of accuracy and confidence required from a competitive market.

This ongoing, multi-year project will collect a wide representation of wine samples from throughout the United States, looking to get representative samples based on factors such as volume produced, while also noting the natural analytical variation of the types of samples when determining when additional samples are need. In addition, the project will focus on documenting the supporting data needed to allow a strongly defensible and scientifically valid wine authenticity database unlike any in current existence.

The focus of this database is directed at authenticating the variety of the grape source, with as broad a geographic range as possible. It is not intended as a validation of appellation, although the results may force some granularity if geography prevents a more general categorization.

We are looking for as many wineries as possible to contribute several wine samples over the course of the study. We have developed a system of double-blind sample handling to protect the information of all participants. At this time, wine samples must be at least 95% of one grape variety, with 11 varieties accepted: Chardonnay, Pinot Grigio/Pinot Gris, Riesling, Sauvignon Blanc, Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Malbec, Petite Sirah, Pinot Noir, Syrah and Zinfandel. The sample set and the percentage requirements may change in the future. Only 50 mL of each sample is needed, along with information on the vintage, variety, and some production methods.

We appreciate your consideration of this project. If you would like to learn more about the requirements and how to participate, please read these links and/or watch the introductory videos.

    How to Participate in the Wine NMR project (Video)
    How to Participate in the Wine NMR project (Pdf)
    A detailed video on how to enter metadata into the Excel Spreadsheet

If you would like to learn more, please contact:

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