Dry farming: Key Concepts

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Dry Farming

Crop production in the dry season that relies on residual soil moisture stored from precipitation

Bucklin Old Hill Ranch, Sonoma Valley
photo credit: CAFF

How does dry-farming work?

- Drought tolerance of grapevines
  - Deep roots: 6 to 12 ft (average) up to 40ft
  - Efficient control of water loss
  - Prioritize berry growth
- Reasonable water stress can improve berry composition
  - Increase color compounds
  - Concentrated flavors
  - Taste tests prefer drought stressed wines?

Dry-farming: Costs and Benefits

- Improved grape/wine quality
- Balance vine without pruning
- Reduce water use
- Potential yield loss
- No irrigation back-up system
- Economic viability?

Dry-Farming Considerations

- Dry farming may not be possible or economically viable everywhere. Things to consider:

- Annual precipitation
  - Amount necessary will vary depending on other climate factors.
- Soils
  - Water holding capacity, loamy, clay loam
  - Soil depth

Dry-Farming System

- Vineyard architecture
  - Spacing
  - Trellising
  - Rootstock
- Row cultivation
  - Maximize water holding capacity of the soils
  - Cover Crops
  - Dust mulch
  - Find a system that works for your vineyard

Tablas Creek, Paso Robles

Wolff Vineyards, Edna Valley

To become part of our dry-farming network, contact us:

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For more information

www.caff.org/programs/dryfarm/

Thank you!