

Wine producers as landscape wildfire stewards against wildfire

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Abstract

Wildfires represent a recurrent threat to Mediterranean forests. Agricultural parcels amidst the forested landscape constitute a key fuel discontinuity, which is a crucial infrastructure for the fire responders to attack with security, and/or to modify the wildfire spread behaviour. Maintaining those fields active constitute a security service to parts of the landscape (WUI-homes, parcels of forests). Yet, northern Mediterranean (particularly mountain) agriculture is progressively being abandoned, thus increasing forest continuity and consequently the risk of larger wildfires. The abandonment of agricultural land is accelerating because of the ageing of the farming population and the small size of the new projects of Neo-rural population. Then we have been able to observe during 21st century a deep change in agriculture social and physical landscape that will go on evolving these 20 next years.

The vision of those agriculture producers on wildfires is hence crucial to activate fire-resilient landscape management. Our exploratory study is based on in-depth interviews and field visits to wine-producers in Mediterranean Spain, Portugal and France, turning around 3 main questions: Which are the productive factors of vineyard managers and wine producers that relate to wildfire risk/ Which are their concerns? Are them interested in engaging in fire- reduction measures? What is the existing support of administrations in this field/ Is it necessary to improve it and how? We will present part of the results we obtained from these interviews. On the same line, a survey has been spread in late April in four countries (Spain, Portugal, Italy and France) and some analysis could be presented in July.

Keywords: wildfire, fire risk, wine sector, landscape resiliency