

Organic wine is twice as good for the planet

(27 August 2008) — Good news for eco-conscious wine connoisseurs: a little of what you fancy need not cost the Earth, but only if it's organic.

Valentina Niccolucci and colleagues from the University of Siena, Italy, measured the resources used to grow, package and distribute wine made from Sangiovese grapes at two farms in Tuscany 30 kilometres apart. The organic farm used only natural fertilisers and pesticides, and most operations were done by hand, while the other used conventional methods of production. The team worked out the resources needed to support the making of each wine - its "eco-footprint".

A bottle from the organic farm had an eco-footprint of 7.17 square metres, half that of the non-organic wine with a footprint of 13.98 square metres. This is because the mechanised production used more land and non-recycled glass (Agriculture, Ecosystems and Environment, DOI: 10.1016/j.agee.2008.05.015).

Though it's not clear that organic food is always eco-friendly, the team say wine producers could shift to organic systems to reduce their overall ecological impact.

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