



‘Cluster effect’ crucial to a wine region’s success, say researchers

The Yakima Valley AVA is located in both Yakima and Benton Counties and is home to over 30% of the state's vineyard acreage. Yakima and Benton counties combined produced over 9.5 million cases of wine in 2014. This equates to **67% of the state's total wine production**.*

The wine industry (wine production, tourism, and distribution) in Yakima and Benton counties creates more than 3,600 jobs, \$151.7 million in labor income and generates business revenues exceeding \$1.01 billion*. These numbers underscore the importance this region's wine industry has on our local and state economy. The impact is unquestionable...let's use it to create a crucial *cluster effect* to build our brand. The following quotes and comments are from an article by Chris Mercer in Decanter, August 2014.

Winemakers in lesser known region’s need more than good terroir & money to emulate famous names like Bordeaux, Champagne and Rioja, argue researchers in a new book on the ‘wine cluster effect’.

Even with the best terroir in the world, a winemaker’s chances of success will be hamstrung without a hard core of nearby, like-minded producers who are able to combine building their own wine empire with a collective strategy for critical acclaim.

The research identifies France’s Cahors region as one whose brand suffered because a strong cluster was missing. “Producers could not pull themselves out of the hole, because they ‘could not reach a strategic consensus’, according Valery Michaux, head of research at Neoma Business School in Reims.

Conversely, Michaux highlighted Champagne as a region that has benefited strongly from the cluster effect. ‘Champagne is really well balanced. There’s a paradox; each producer has their own strategy, but there’s also a collective strategy.’ She said emerging wine regions do not always need wealthy backers.

It’s not about being rich it’s about an entrepreneurial culture. Wine Yakima Valley has created great messaging – our audiences are starting to understand what the Valley represents. What we need is a unified voice sharing the same message. We need to create our own *cluster effect*, we need to all work together. Please consider joining Wine Yakima Valley as we continue to create and share the story of this great wine region.

The Yakima Valley was once the center of the Washington wine industry. However, with industry expansion and development of new regions and voices, it has lost that position. We are now a small voice in a very large crowd. The Yakima Valley needs a unified voice to regain that recognition and consumer support. We need to create our own Cluster Effect by working together. Please consider joining Wine Yakima Valley as we continue to create and share the story of this great wine region.

* Source: *Economic and Fiscal Impacts of Wine & Wine Grapes in Washington State. August 2015. Washington Wine Commission/cai Community Attributes Inc.*