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63rd International DWV Congress The “Measuring quality - analytically and by using sensors” session

From 4 to 6 November, at the same time as the INTERVITIS INTERFRUCTA HORTITECHNICA 2018 technology trade fair, the German Winegrowers' Association (Deutscher Weinbauverband e.V. - DWV) is also hosting the 63rd International DWV-Congress. The theme for the congress is “Viticulture 4.0”, and it will explore the opportunities and risks of digitisation in the manufacturing and marketing of wine.

Professor Ulrich Fischer and Achim Rosch will present the session entitled “Measuring quality - analytically and by using sensors”. International experts have been invited to speak at the session, who together with the participants will approach the topic of digitisation in viticulture from various perspectives. Nowadays, talk of “quality” when referring to wine means more than colour, smell and taste, but the term is also used when talking about the lack of contaminants, compliance with legal requirements and also availability.

In an interview with the presenters conducted by DWV General Secretary Dr Rudolf Nickenig, the person responsible for the conference, Professor Fischer explained where digitisation can make a decisive improvement to product quality. Since in addition to being able to continuously document the process internally, there are also a number of possibilities resulting from digitalising the instruments used in preparing the grapes as well as in treating the wine. Where, for example, previously photographs were taken of grapes to distinguish between healthy and rotten ones, the near-infrared spectroscopy looks under the surface of the berries, whereby automatic grape sorting systems select grapes according to the degree of ripeness of the grape seeds or the sugar content of the berries.

Armin Rosch describes the possibilities offered by the new instruments for sensory analysis as follows: “We can use human sensory analysts to train the new pieces of analytical equipment to automatically detect an off-odour such as the emergence of a sulphide smell due to a lack of nutrients in the yeast or oxidative marks due to a damaged barrique barrel. This sends a notification to the winemaker's smartphone, who knows that Barrique no. 17 is leaking and the acetic acid bacteria are in the draining holes and the yeast in Tank 61 could do with some ammonia and would respond by producing less sulphide.” This promises to be a very exciting exchange of opinions and experiences between researchers and those working in industry. Another topic which the session will focus on is which methods and instruments are affordable to smaller vineyards.

Further details on the programme and on how to register for the expert conferences on 5 and 6 November, for which an early booking discount applies until 31 August 2018, are available online on the Congress website at www.dwv-kongress.de