



ASVO WINE SHOW PROJECT

RECOMMENDATION II

AUDIT PROTOCOLS

INTRODUCTION

The ASVO Wine Show Committee (WSC) has identified wine show “audit protocol” as an issue of wine show management which is already under scrutiny by the wider industry and therefore needs to be addressed.

All national and regional wine shows have formal audit procedures in their entry regulations to prove and guarantee the integrity of exhibits, but these vary in the way they operate.

PROBLEMS IN CURRENT PRACTICE

- Varying degrees of implementation of audit procedures from show to show.
- Audits on exhibitors are conducted, at the discretion of the wine show organising committee, by a representative or nominee on an “as required basis” or randomly as administration permits.
- Audits are carried out at varying times post judging.
- Penalties for breach of entry guidelines identified in audits vary in degrees of severity from withdrawal of the award involved, through total disqualification of the exhibitor, to a ban from exhibiting at shows for a designated period of time.
- Due to the current infrequency of auditing, wine shows may be left exposed to fraudulent entry by exhibitors who take a risk and falsify entries.
- Many wine show organising committees are staffed by exhibitors and, as such, may have a conflict of interest in the decision to audit an exhibitor.
- The cost and time in auditing may be prohibitive to some wine show committees.
- Problems in identifying the correct manufacturing or storage location of an exhibit.

OBJECTIVES

- To establish and recommend a common audit protocol which all national and regional wine shows may adopt.

- To make audits thorough and consistent across all national and regional wine shows.
- To establish clear and specific penalties for breaches of regulations identified during audit.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1 Consistent and standardised protocol be adopted for audit procedures, to confirm that an exhibitor's entry is compliant with regulations
- 2 To ensure credibility, all wine shows should undertake audits on a regular basis and on no less than 1% of total entries, inclusive of major trophy winners.
- 3 Audits should be undertaken on classes of major significance (eg. trophy classes or significant medal classes) as well as other classes.
- 4 Additionally, audits should be spontaneous and carried out on different classes each year, testing different entry criteria to keep exhibitors on their toes
- 5 Audits should be carried out immediately post judging.
- 6 All audit procedures and penalties should be set out separately in a clearly defined section of the wine show entry schedule.
- 7 All exhibitors should supply an address which identifies the actual winery or manufacturing location where each entry may be audited.
- 8 All exhibitors should be clearly and accurately identified.
- 9 Use a suitably trained, ASVO-appointed person or persons to act as official auditors to ensure impartiality and a common methodology in the auditing process. This would be on a user-pays basis.
- 10 The cost of engaging such an official auditor could be recouped in entry fees by the addition of perhaps \$2.00 per entry.
- 11 Samples of stocks being audited should be tasted and reviewed against the original exhibited sample by the auditor and / or representatives appointed by the organisers of the wine show:-
 - both samples should be analysed for alcohol, titratable acidity and pH
 - checks should be undertaken by wine show organisers to ensure that any awards won by an exhibitor are to be or are being used legitimately for marketing purposes.
 - when an exhibitor is found to be marketing an award winning wine fraudulently (that is the marketed wine looks and tastes significantly different from the check sample) a wine show:-

- must make judgment as to whether an exhibitor has made a genuine mistake or deliberately breached protocols
- should analyse and taste the released wine and compare against any hold back sample or prior analysis
- can contact an exhibitor to advise that the wine show suspects foul play and advise that in the future, this exhibitor will be monitored for a period of time to collect and collate evidence
- penalties for breaching specified audit regulations include warnings, disqualification and removal of any award or imposing of a life ban

12. The use of check samples in Commercial classes to be encouraged. This involves a wine show buying, from a retailer and prior to the judging, a bottle of a labeled entry, this bottle being tasted by the judging panel alongside the exhibit. Any disparity should be drawn to the attention of the Exhibitor and could result in penalties.