Wine cooperatives performance determinants : a comparative analysis between Italy and France

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It is quite difficult to highlight the importance of cooperatives around the world due to their varying fortunes during the past century and furthermore, it is difficult to imagine their future, but if we take into consideration only the wine sector in Italy and in France, we can see that the cooperative lobby is responsible for more than 50% of the production in both of the countries.

Once stated the importance of cooperatives our mission is to describe what determine the huge difference between healthy cooperatives and cooperatives with some pathological problems. Does it depend on their size? Does it depend on the way they are managed? Does it depend on how or whether they innovate or not? Does it depend on other factors?

Our research aims to underline how the performance of wine cooperatives changes according to the introduction or not of simple variables in the management of the cooperative.

Analysing different cooperation theories elaborated in the past 50 years, which are: a) the cooperative as the vertical integration of a certain number of farms, b) the cooperative as a private (and independent) firm and c) the cooperative as a coalition of firms which act in a collective or collaborative manner, we find the most suitable approach to sustain our

hypothesis, i.e. the cooperative seen as a vertical integration (see Emelianoff, 1942; Robotka, 1953, Saccomandi, 1992).

The economists and agro-economists paid a lot of attention to what really influences the performance of cooperatives. But to make a projection in such a difficult market, at least in Europe, due to political uncertainty (wine CMO reform), higher competition and decreasing consumptions, is so important that this subject becomes crucial.

We will try to answer to this question using a deductive system and by listing a certain number of Cooperatives Performance determinants, by classifying and examining them.

We will focus on the problems inside the cooperative; we will only partially investigate on the pre-production phase (way to buy/receive the inputs) and in the post-production phase (way to remunerate the members/selling the outputs).

After that, we will use a questionnaire to 25 cooperatives on the organization and management of wine cooperatives in Italy (specifically in Umbria, a region in the centre of Italy), and in France (in particular on the Languedoc-Roussillon, a region in southern France). The total amount of data will be processed with a multivariable analysis (using SPSS.15 software) to find links between structural variables, management approach and performance results.

We have already collected the necessary data[1] which will be processed during the next weeks. The paper we will present will be part of a wider research that we are carrying out in about the cooperatives in the agrofood industries.

JEL Classification Q010; Q130

[1] The data concerning cooperatives in Languedoc Roussillon region are provided by MOÏSA research unit (based in Montpellier, FRANCE).

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