



Consolidated Interviews of Each Country

Biodynamic Viticulture in Central and Eastern Europe

CROATIA

General Observations

As part of the VITA project research in Croatia, interviews were conducted with six wine producers representing different stages of organic and biodynamic development: Winery Dvanjaščak, Winery Bedeković, Winery Tomac, Winery Lovrec, Winery Kopjar, and Ivan Anton Čegec. The wineries differ considerably in size, production model, experience, market position, and degree of engagement with biodynamic farming. Nevertheless, the interviews reveal a remarkably consistent set of challenges, motivations, and needs that help explain the current position of biodynamic viticulture in Croatia.

The Croatian wineries included in the research range from very small boutique vineyards of approximately 2.5–3.5 hectares to larger family estates of around 14 hectares, with annual production ranging from small artisanal volumes to approximately 50,000–90,000 bottles or more. Some are already experienced biodynamic practitioners, while others are certified organic producers considering biodynamic conversion, and one operates a mixed conventional-organic model while remaining open to biodynamic principles.

A common feature is that biodynamics is rarely perceived primarily as a marketing instrument. Producers who practice it, or are interested in adopting it, generally describe it as a logical continuation of organic farming and as a way to improve soil vitality, biodiversity, vine resilience, grape quality, and the overall balance of the farm. Several interviewees explicitly stressed that biodynamics should be practical, precise, and based on observation rather than reduced to abstract philosophy or certification.

The interviews also show that Croatian biodynamic viticulture is developing through individual pioneers, personal networks, consultants, international contacts, and experimentation rather than through a strong national support structure. Knowledge is often acquired from foreign-language materials, study visits, experienced colleagues, consultants, or trial and error on the farm.

Main Challenges Identified

1. Lack of practical and structured knowledge

One of the clearest conclusions is the shortage of accessible, practical knowledge specifically adapted to Croatian viticultural conditions. Several producers understand the general principles of biodynamics but lack confidence regarding implementation: preparation making and application, timing, vineyard protection, soil management, composting, and the integration of biodynamic practices into existing organic systems. Small and medium producers in particular may not be able to afford individual consultants. Practical mentoring, demonstrations in vineyards, study visits, and opportunities to consult experienced practitioners are therefore more valuable than purely theoretical lectures.

2. Climate change and disease pressure

Climate is among the strongest barriers to ecological and biodynamic viticulture in Croatia. The interviewed wineries repeatedly mentioned spring frost, hail, storms, excessive rainfall, drought, and strong disease pressure, especially downy mildew (peronospora). Some producers reported severe or even complete crop losses in difficult years. Humid continental wine-growing areas are particularly challenging because organic production may require numerous copper and sulphur treatments. This creates a central technical question for future development: how to maintain reliable disease control while reducing dependence on copper and other external inputs. The interviews suggest that producers increasingly see healthy soil, biodiversity, cover crops, compost, resistant varieties, and preventive vineyard management as part of the long-term solution.

3. Consumer awareness and market perception

Consumer understanding of organic and biodynamic wine remains limited. Interviewees repeatedly observed that many Croatian consumers do not clearly distinguish between conventional, organic, natural, orange, and biodynamic wine. In some cases, the term biodynamic is associated with faulty natural wines, oxidation, unusual aromas, or unstable products. In other cases, producers can use ecological language without consumers understanding what certification actually guarantees. This creates both a communication problem and a credibility problem. Education aimed at consumers, sommeliers, restaurants, distributors, and the wider wine sector is therefore essential.

4. Limited market incentive for biodynamic certification

The interviews indicate that Demeter certification currently offers limited direct commercial advantage on the Croatian market. Awareness of the Demeter label is low, while certification can involve additional costs, administrative requirements, approved-input restrictions, and organizational work. Producers who are committed to biodynamic principles may therefore practice biodynamics without seeing certification as an immediate priority. For some wineries, certification remains a future goal; for others, authenticity, ecological responsibility, and wine quality are more important than the label itself. Any project activity promoting certification should therefore also address its practical and economic value for producers.

5. Labor and economic constraints

Organic and biodynamic vineyards require significant attention and, in many cases, more manual work. Croatian producers face difficulties finding reliable vineyard workers, while smaller family wineries often have limited staff and must combine production, sales, marketing, administration, and vineyard work. Ecological inputs, specialized equipment, consultancy, certification, and repeated vineyard treatments can increase production costs. At the same time, consumers are often price-sensitive and may not be willing to pay a premium simply because a wine is organic or biodynamic. This gap between production costs and market recognition makes conversion a substantial economic risk.

6. Need for peer networks and practical cooperation

Knowledge exchange emerged as one of the strongest opportunities. Producers who have access to experienced consultants or international biodynamic networks are considerably more confident and advanced in their practices. Several interviewees already share knowledge informally with friends and neighboring wineries. This suggests strong potential for a Croatian and regional network of practitioners in which experienced biodynamic producers can mentor wineries in transition. Cooperation could also include field days, preparation-making workshops, shared equipment, exchange of locally adapted cover-crop strategies, disease-management experience, and cross-border study visits.

7. Biodynamics as a long-term ecological strategy

Despite the obstacles, the interviews show substantial interest in the ecological principles behind biodynamics. Producers repeatedly referred to soil microorganisms, biodiversity, natural resilience, reduced chemical dependence, cover crops, compost, spontaneous fermentation, low-intervention winemaking, and the vineyard as a living system. The strongest practitioners see biodynamics not as a short-term technique but as a long-term process whose results may take years to become fully visible. This long horizon is important when designing education and support: producers need realistic expectations, continuous guidance, and opportunities to evaluate results over several seasons.

Certification and the Role of Demeter

The Croatian interviews reveal a spectrum of attitudes toward certification. Some wineries are actively moving toward Demeter certification or would like to use the label for part of their production, while experienced biodynamic practitioners may place greater emphasis on the quality and integrity of the practice itself. The common issue is that certification alone cannot drive biodynamic development if consumers do not understand its meaning and producers do not perceive sufficient added value. The project should therefore treat certification as one component of a broader system that includes practical competence, credibility, consumer education, and market development.

Market Realities and Education Gaps

The Croatian wine market has several specific characteristics. Tourism creates strong demand, but high-spending customers often prefer internationally recognized wine and Champagne brands. Domestic consumers can also be strongly price-oriented. At the same time, there is a growing niche of consumers, restaurants, sommeliers, and wine professionals interested in authentic, organic, natural, and terroir-driven wines. The interviews indicate that this niche can grow if communication improves. Biodynamic wine should not be presented merely as an alternative category, but as a form of high-quality viticulture based on soil health, precision, ecological responsibility, and expression of place.

Recommended Focus for Future VITA Project Activities

Based on the interviews, the most useful project support would be practical rather than purely promotional. Croatia would benefit from structured training adapted specifically to viticulture, including preparation 500 and 501, compost preparations, dynamization and application, cover crops, soil revitalization, disease prevention, reduction of copper use, and low-intervention winemaking. Training should combine theory with vineyard demonstrations and seasonal follow-up.

A mentoring system connecting experienced biodynamic winemakers with organic producers interested in conversion could address the current lack of trusted advice. Cross-border exchanges with practitioners from countries where biodynamic viticulture is more established would also be valuable, particularly when they focus on farms with comparable climatic conditions. The project could additionally support clear educational materials in Croatian and develop communication tools explaining the difference between conventional, organic, natural, and biodynamic wine, as well as the meaning of Demeter certification.

Pilot activities could be particularly effective. Instead of expecting wineries to convert immediately, selected producers could test biodynamic preparations or soil-management approaches on individual parcels, document results, and compare experiences over several seasons. Such demonstrations would reduce perceived risk and create locally relevant evidence that other Croatian growers could observe directly.

Overall Conclusion

The Croatian interviews show that biodynamic viticulture has genuine potential, but its development is still driven mainly by individual conviction rather than by market demand or institutional structures. Croatia already has experienced pioneers, long-established organic wineries, innovative small producers, and conventional or mixed-model wineries that are curious about biodynamic methods. This creates a strong foundation for further development.

The principal barriers are not a lack of interest, but a combination of practical knowledge gaps, difficult climatic conditions, disease pressure, labor shortages, production costs, limited consumer awareness, and uncertainty about the commercial value of certification. These challenges closely resemble issues identified in the Czech and Polish interviews, particularly the need for locally relevant advice, stronger consumer education, better access to practical expertise, and clearer benefits for producers who commit to biodynamic methods.

For Croatia, the most effective path forward is therefore likely to be gradual and practice-oriented: strengthen the network of producers, make reliable knowledge easier to access, demonstrate biodynamic methods under local conditions, support peer-to-peer learning, and improve communication with the market. The interviews suggest that when producers can see practical results in healthier soils, more resilient vineyards, improved grape quality, and greater ecological balance, biodynamics becomes convincing through experience rather than through theory alone.

The VITA project can play an important role by connecting these existing initiatives and transforming scattered individual experience into a more systematic regional knowledge base. If education, mentoring, demonstration, and consumer communication are developed together, biodynamic viticulture in Croatia has the potential to move from a small pioneering movement toward a more visible and credible component of sustainable wine production.

CZECHIA

General Observations

As part of the research, a total of 9 different interviews were conducted with winemakers, 6 of which were ultimately included in the document. However, the conclusions presented below generally apply to all the wineries surveyed.

The wineries where the interviews were conducted differed greatly from one another.

The smallest wineries were around 2 hectares in size, and although they were run very professionally, they were not the owner's primary source of income.

The largest wineries were around 30–50 hectares in size, produced 100,000 bottles, and were highly successful in international markets.

With the exception of one winery, none are Demeter-certified, and only a few practice biodynamic farming systematically and regularly.

All express a personal need to work biodynamically and are interested in this method of farming.

The most common reason is that they consider biodynamics to be the pinnacle of organic farming and believe it is the right approach to agriculture.

For some, it is also clear that they believe biodynamic farming will improve the health of the vineyards, thereby raising the quality of the grapes and, consequently, improving the wine produced.

In one case, improving the quality of the wines produced is the main goal of testing biodynamic farming methods.

For more than half of those surveyed, biodynamic farming is closely linked to a modern, science-based, ecologically oriented approach to viticulture.

For virtually all respondents, an ecological approach to viticulture is linked to natural winemaking practices; these are often so-called "natural wines," whose character falls outside mainstream categories.

With the exception of one already-certified winery, none of the others believe that Demeter certification could significantly help them with marketing and wine sales.

Only a very limited number of wineries are able to systematically search for information on biodynamic viticulture from foreign online sources. A partial reason is the language barrier, but the main reason is the high fragmentation of sources. There is no single, comprehensive source of information that could be readily consulted when needed.

At the same time, it is clear that for such a specialized agricultural field as viticulture, there is a lack of organized, systematic information on the use of biodynamic and herbal preparations to support and protect grapevines.

Another problem is that it is practically impossible, when needed, to consult on one's practices and findings with a like-minded—and ideally more experienced—person who can refer to one of the tried-and-tested methods.

Another complication is that larger operations need to incorporate specialized equipment (a dynamizer and a special sprayer) into the application process, which is relatively expensive and rarely used. Shared equipment among multiple operations has not yet been implemented anywhere.

In general, the wineries did not complain about the availability of biodynamic preparations.

At three out of nine wineries, biodynamic preparations are the primary means of treating and protecting the vines. The other wineries generally do not trust their effectiveness enough to rely on them entirely.

Most wineries participate in a wide variety of training courses on organic and biodynamic viticulture.

Only a limited number of wineries draw on practical knowledge from abroad and visit like-minded colleagues in other countries.

In general, there is agreement among the surveyed winemakers that Demeter, as a quality label, is known only to a very narrow group of customers. However, this group trusts the label and does not require any further specific explanation.

At the same time, it is clear that the Demeter quality label is completely unknown to the average wine consumer in the Czech Republic, and it is not easy to explain to them how it differs from standard organic-certified wines.

It should also be noted that awareness of the Demeter brand among people interested in wine is many times higher than among consumers of other organically produced foods such as vegetables, meat, milk, etc.

Main Challenges Identified

A lack of opportunities to consult on the use of biodynamic practices tailored to the conditions of Czech and Slovak wine-growing regions

Failure to utilize the potential opportunities that biodynamics offers to winemakers and viticulturists

Low awareness of the Demeter brand among customers and the difficulty of explaining how biodynamics differs from organic farming

HUNGARY

General Observations

The six interviews conducted with Hungarian wine producers -Nyakas, Tomcsányi, Egly, Gyukli, Kecze-Hady, and Turay- reveal a deeply interconnected narrative of tradition, innovation, and resilience in the face of multiple pressures. Despite differences in scale, location, and personal histories, there are striking similarities in their stories. These similarities reveal broader patterns in contemporary Hungarian viticulture, particularly concerning the role of biodynamics and organics, cultural heritage, market dynamics, regulatory burdens, and climate change.

Taken together, their testimonies form a mosaic of modern Hungarian winemaking: one that is rooted in tradition yet challenged by economic and ecological realities.

Balancing Tradition and Innovation

A striking similarity is the way all six producers position themselves between historical continuity and innovative adaptation.

Tradition: Most estates trace their practices, land, or cultural identity back to Hungary's rich viticultural history. Egly works from a 500-year-old Bishop's Palace cellar, while Turay traces his family roots in winemaking back to the 17th century. Kecze-Hady emphasizes the historic 1802 cellar as a living link to the past, while Gyukli connects his work to his father's plantings 40 years ago. Even Nyakas, though structured as a cooperative, retains strong echoes of the socialist-era collective farming model. **Innovation:** At the same time, each producer experiments with organic, biodynamic, or regenerative methods. Tomcsányi integrated biodynamics into his personal lifestyle, Gyukli introduced PIWI fungus-resistant varieties, and Nyakas invested in precision spraying and automation. Egly employs experimental methods like electromagnetic frequency treatment during winemaking, while Turay explores cover crops, resistant varieties, and livestock integration.

This duality -honoring tradition while embracing innovation- is a defining similarity across their stories. They do not reject history but reinterpret it to suit the needs of the present.

Shared Commitment to Organic and Biodynamic Practices

Every winery, regardless of size or philosophy, has taken significant steps toward reducing chemical inputs and working more holistically with nature.

Organic certification: Nyakas maintains a certified organic section; Gyukli has been organic for 17 years; Turay achieved organic certification in 2021; Kecze-Hady was certified in 2023.

Biodynamic orientation: Several explicitly practice biodynamics. Egly and Tomcsányi follow Rudolf Steiner's principles and lunar calendars. Kecze-Hady emphasizes biodynamic spirituality, with crystals and affirmations in the cellar. Turay began applying biodynamic preparations in 2022 and works toward Demeter certification. Gyukli also started conversion to Demeter certification in 2025.

Shared practices: Cover crops, composting, avoidance of herbicides, and reliance on sulfur/copper for plant protection are common. Biodynamic preparations (BD500/BD501) and herbal teas (nettle, chamomile, yarrow) appear repeatedly. Even when not fully converted, like Nyakas, all producers see organic/biodynamic farming as the future of viticulture, despite financial and technical challenges.

Wine as Cultural and Spiritual Expression

A final, profound similarity is the way these winemakers speak of wine not merely as a product, but as a cultural, spiritual, or existential act.

- Egly calls wine a "dialogue between nature and humanity."
- Kecze-Hady describes it as a "spiritual drink," connecting energy, crystals, and positive words.
- Tomcsányi sees biodynamics as a lifestyle, not just an agricultural technique.
- Turay treats viticulture as a "celebration of nature and tradition."
- Gyukli emphasizes happiness and balance over wealth.

- Nyakas frames sustainability as a long-term vision of cultural responsibility.

This philosophical dimension transcends economics. It suggests that Hungarian biodynamic and organic winemakers are motivated not only by markets but by a desire for harmony, authenticity, and meaning.

Main Challenges Identified

Climate Change as an Existential Challenge

Climate stress, especially drought, extreme weather, and disease pressure, is a universal theme.

Drought: Nyakas struggles with increasingly severe drought and old vines failing. Gyukli noted that in 2023, from May to October, only 14mm of rain fell. Turay faced only 10mm of winter rainfall in 2023. Egly lost significant yield during the 2023 drought. **Disease and pests:** Downy mildew and fungal infections are common challenges, particularly in organic/biodynamic systems with limited treatment options. Several also report wildlife damage (Kecze-Hady and Gyukli highlight wild animals preferring organic grapes).

Adaptation strategies: Producers replant with climate-resilient or resistant varieties (Nyakas with more whites, Gyukli with PIWI, Turay with resistant grapes). Cover crops, livestock integration, and soil regeneration practices (no plowing, composting, green manure) are seen as essential responses.

Thus, climate change is not an abstract concern -it is directly shaping vineyard choices and philosophies.

Bureaucratic and Regulatory Burdens

Nearly all producers describe Hungarian bureaucracy as a major obstacle. **Certification hurdles:** Tomcsányi and Egly complain about rigid and sometimes hostile regulation, especially concerning biodynamics. Gyukli highlights the paperwork burden - spending up to 8 hours daily, compared to just minutes in earlier years. Nyakas notes the difficulty of aligning cooperative members under organic standards.

Market and labeling regulations: Many producers feel that national authorities (e.g., NÉBIH) lack flexibility for small-scale or biodynamic operations, often favoring large, conventional producers.

This bureaucratic overload creates frustration and slows innovation, yet all producers persist -often relying instead on informal peer networks for advice and support.

Labor Shortages and Family Reliance

Labor is another shared challenge.

Labor scarcity: Nyakas struggles with labor shortages due to proximity to Budapest. Tomcsányi and Egly also note the difficulty of finding skilled, reliable workers. **Family-centered work:** All producers rely heavily on family. Egly works with his wife and one helper; Turay works with his wife and sister; Tomcsányi involves his children in the lifestyle; Kecze-Hady runs everything as a tight family operation.

Solutions: Some experiment with automation (Nyakas with robotics), but most depend on personal labor, making expansion difficult.

This theme reflects both the economic vulnerability of small wineries and the resilience of family- based models.

Market Realities and Education Gaps

Market Challenges: Domestic Indifference and Reliance on Niche Exports

Another recurring theme is the tension between domestic demand and niche foreign markets.

Domestic market: Hungarian consumers are often skeptical of organic/biodynamic wines, seeing them as unconventional or too expensive. Nyakas finds supermarkets unreceptive to higher prices. Gyukli notes declining per-capita wine consumption (from 36 liters in 1990 to 12 liters today). Egly faces local skepticism about biodynamics, seen as "sect-like."

Foreign/niche markets: Many producers turn to exports or specialized markets. Tomcsányi sells 70% abroad, where biodynamic/natural wines are more valued. Turay exports a portion to the USA and Europe. Kecze-Hady, while mostly local, exports a small amount to South Korea. Egly sells largely to Hungarian gastronomy but frames his wines as cultural heritage pieces, not commodities.

Tourism and direct sales: Several wineries rely heavily on tourism, tastings, and direct sales to consumers. Gyukli is booked full from April to October with vineyard events. Kecze-Hady sells 70% on-site and

complements sales with Airbnb rentals. Turay integrates wine tourism with gastronomy through his sister's restaurant. Overall, these wineries survive not through mainstream retail but through direct relationships with consumers and foreign niche markets.

Recommended Focus for Future VITA Project Activities

Addressing Climate Change and Vineyard Resilience

Observed needs from interviews:

- Severe drought (Nyakas, Gyukli, Turay, Egly).
- Disease pressure, especially downy mildew and fungal infections (Tomcsányi, Kecze-Hady).
- Wildlife damage (Gyukli, Kecze-Hady).

Training components:

- Strategies for water retention: cover crops, mulching, deep-rooting varieties, soil health management.
- PIWI varieties (Gyukli's expertise) and other resistant cultivars as practical case studies.
- Integrating animals (sheep, cows, pigs) for soil regeneration and biodiversity.
- Adaptive pruning and canopy management to cope with heat and disease.

Practical Biodynamic Methods and Knowledge Exchange

Observed needs:

- Some wineries (Egly, Kecze-Hady, Tomcsányi) are already using BD preparations but in different ways.
- Knowledge gaps about preparation, timing, and application methods.
- Desire for practical, hands-on training (Kecze-Hady emphasized "more gatherings around biodynamics").

Training components:

- Step-by-step demonstrations of BD500, BD501, compost preparations.
- Practical sessions on herbal teas (nettle, chamomile, yarrow), composting, and plantbased sprays.
- How to integrate lunar and cosmic calendars into viticulture (Maria Thun calendar).

Overcoming Bureaucracy and Regulatory Challenges

Observed needs:

- Heavy paperwork and certification hurdles (Gyukli, Tomcsányi, Egly, Nyakas).
- Difficulties with labeling and national food safety authority (Tomcsányi).
- Cooperative and group certification challenges (Nyakas).

Training components:

- Practical navigation of Hungarian and EU organic/biodynamic regulations.
- Workshops with consultants on certification processes (Demeter, organic, vegan, etc.).
- Strategies for collective or cooperative approaches to reduce bureaucracy.

Market Development and Consumer Education

Observed needs:

- Hungarian consumers skeptical of biodynamic/natural wines (Nyakas, Egly, Gyukli).
- Difficulty selling in supermarkets (Nyakas).
- Dependence on export and niche gastronomy (Tomcsányi, Turay, Kecze-Hady).
- Tourism as a strong revenue stream (Gyukli, Kecze-Hady, Turay).

Training components:

- Storytelling and branding for biodynamic/natural wines (how to communicate authenticity and values).
- Direct-to-consumer strategies (wine tourism, tastings, events).
- Export market opportunities (where natural/biodynamic wines are in demand).

Labor, Knowledge Transfer, and Community Support

Observed needs:

- Labor shortages across all wineries.

- Heavy reliance on family labor (all six wineries).
- Limited structured training opportunities (Tomcsányi, Kecze-Hady).
- Informal peer networks filling the gap (Gyukli, Tomcsányi, Turay).

Training components:

- Collaborative labor solutions: seasonal worker sharing, internship/apprenticeship models.
- Knowledge transfer between experienced and new winemakers (e.g., Nyakas' cooperative scale vs. Tomcsányi's family scale).
- Training of trainers: enabling experienced biodynamic practitioners to mentor others.
- Building regional learning hubs (similar to biodynamic preparation days in Legénd).

Integrating Cultural and Spiritual Dimensions

Observed needs:

- Many winemakers view wine as cultural/spiritual (Egly, Kecze-Hady, Turay).
- Desire to link viticulture with heritage, gastronomy, and rural tourism.
- Consumers and authorities often misunderstand this dimension.

Training components:

- Philosophy of biodynamics: beyond farming, towards a holistic lifestyle (as lived by Tomcsányi).
- Wine as cultural storytelling: how to frame vineyards as heritage preservation (Egly's approach).
- Integrating hospitality, gastronomy, and tourism with biodynamic practice (Turay and Kecze-Hady examples).

Overall Conclusion

Despite differences in scale—from Nyakas's 210-hectare cooperative to Turay's 2.7- hectare family estate—the six Hungarian wine producers interviewed tell strikingly similar stories. They are bound by:

The balancing act between tradition and innovation.

A shared commitment to organic and biodynamic principles.

The urgent struggle with climate change.

Heavy burdens from bureaucracy and regulations.

Market difficulties at home and reliance on niche or direct sales.

Chronic labor shortages and reliance on family work.

A deeper view of wine as cultural, spiritual, and ecological expression.

Together, these themes paint a picture of resilient, creative, and values-driven winemakers navigating Hungary's shifting viticultural landscape. They are not only making wine -they are redefining what it means to cultivate land, sustain family legacies, and express identity in the face of global and local pressures.

POLAND

Main Challenges Identified

How to reduce the risk of downy mildew without copper? how to stop using copper sprays altogether.

Consumer awareness. Despite considerable marketing efforts, only 5–10% of conscious clients see value in the fact that the farm is organic and biodynamic.

In spring 2023, a frost of -9°C resulted in a 100% crop loss.

The bottom of the hill has more fertile soil, which leads to higher disease pressure — especially gray mold and downy mildew.

Frequent issues with birds and foxes (which attack their ducks).

Labor shortages — it's hard to find people to work in the vineyard.

Spring frosts, particularly on the original plot planted by the previous generation.

Wild animals – including deer, badgers, raccoons, hares, and small birds, which all contribute to crop loss.

High humidity, which leads to problems with gray mold (*Botrytis*). Mixed plantings with a wide range of varieties, and in some rows, up to three different varieties grow side by side — making vineyard work more difficult and less efficient young vines struggled with drought, so an irrigation system was installed, which is now planned to be used for compost teas.

significant weather-related difficulties — including spring frost and flooding in the summer.

Another major challenge is the Polish wine market, which is described as unusual: - The majority of consumers don't see any difference between wines beyond the price tag. - A small niche group — mainly connected to the gastronomy industry — treats wine more like a fetish than a product of agriculture. - Lack of consumer awareness: Customers often don't understand the difference between organic and biodynamic wine—sometimes not even between biodynamic and conventional.

Very high production costs.

Polish viticulture is still new: Wine production from one's own grapes has only been legal for about a dozen years. There's a lack of skilled workers. Those available work at half the speed of their counterparts in France or Germany, driving labor costs even higher.

Legal restrictions: Polish law prohibits online alcohol sales, while younger generations shop almost exclusively online.

Wildlife damage: Deer, hares, and more recently, stags and wild boars have been causing increasing damage.

Climate & Soil

Loess soil is extremely prone to erosion. While annual rainfall isn't very high, individual storms can be severe — sometimes up to 50 mm in just 2 hours.

Legal Restrictions in Poland

- Online alcohol sales are prohibited — Poland is the only country in Europe with this restriction. - Advertising alcohol is also forbidden.

Consumer Awareness

Few customers recognize the value of organic or biodynamic food and wine. Most Polish consumers have no idea what biodynamics is.

Farmer Mindset

The biggest concern among Polish farmers is not soil degradation or climate change, but “soon there'll be nothing left to spray with.” Many do not believe that non-conventional farming is viable at all.

Certification and the Role of Demeter

The farm is certified organic and has completed the biodynamic conversion. However, the high cost of Demeter certification – combined with the low consumer awareness – raises doubts about whether the certification is truly worthwhile.

The farm abandoned organic certification after three years when the inspectors only reviewed documents without even visiting the vineyard. They have no interest in either organic or biodynamic certification, as they feel these systems lack credibility in their current form. Instead, they became a member of VinNatur — a respected international organization for natural winemakers. Their wine was tested and accepted, and for the owners, this validation is more trustworthy than conventional certification.

The winery hasn't pursued certification yet. The vineyard is still very young and not yet producing wine. For now, they are focused on learning and preparing themselves. Certification may come later.

The vineyard is certified organic. Back in 2019, Reto Ingold (Demeter advisor) prepared a conversion plan and concluded that it was essentially ready for Demeter certification. Unfortunately, Demeter certification is not economically justifiable at this time. Despite their full commitment to the principles and years of promoting them in Poland, they simply cannot afford it. The Demeter brand is virtually unknown on the Polish market. It does not convince customers or help with domestic sales—it's purely an additional cost. Realistically, it only makes sense for producers who export to Germany. Biodynamic farming and winemaking are a personal conviction and financial responsibility of the owners, but they cannot afford to actively promote the Demeter brand. An additional challenge is that only substances listed and approved in Germany may be used— despite the existence of chemically identical and twice as cheap alternatives produced locally in Poland.

The vineyard is certified organic. There is no biodynamic certification yet, mainly due to several challenges: - unsure if he can manage fermentation with indigenous yeasts for all his wines. - The Demeter-approved list of preparations and fertilizers is very limited in comparison to what's available in Poland. Many of the same substances exist under different names, produced locally at half the price, but they cannot be used because they're not on the German list.

Market Realities and Education Gaps

Polish customers don't yet recognize the value of organic or biodynamic wines — for most, it's still all about the price.

A lack of reliable sources of knowledge:

There are no websites in Polish dedicated to biodynamic viticulture. The first book was published only two years ago.

For a long time, he thought basalt powder or algae were themselves biodynamic preparations — a misunderstanding due to lack of access to proper education.

The lack of educational resources is a major obstacle. Practical knowledge is especially hard to come by — even understanding how to dynamize biodynamic preparations took them a long time to figure out.

There is no Polish-language literature, no dedicated websites, and very few lectures or workshops focused on biodynamic viticulture.

There are very few lectures or courses in Poland about organic or biodynamic viticulture — especially those focused on soil revitalization and soil care.



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