



The Federation of French Coopers disputes the remarks of a Bordeaux laboratory

The Federation of French Coopers is very surprised by Pascal Chatonnet's remarks, as recently conveyed by the press, whereby coopers are alleged to severely underestimate the risks of developing cork taint in new barrels.

(His remarks on 2,4,6-trichloroanisole (TCA) and oak wood were used from an article submitted for publication in the Journal of Agriculture and Food Chemistry, which has not yet been published.)

Mr. Chatonnet represents a Bordeaux-based laboratory, one of many such laboratories in France and the rest of Europe. His allegations are inaccurate and demeaning to the French cooperage profession when he insinuates the problems encountered are more frequent and severe than they actually are.

French coopers have in fact for many years paid much attention to the issue of cork taint, working directly with their clients (wine producers whose skills cannot be called into question) and through the Federation.

Through a TCA oversight commission, the Federation records and analyzes all data in a representative and recurrent manner.

Suspicious cases of TCA have, on average, represented 0.04% of oak barrel production over the last three years. Actual recognized cases have represented less than 0.03%, or less than 100 barrels out of a total production of approximately 500,000 barrels last year. No notable intensification over the past few years has been observed.

Within the Federation of French Coopers, a technical committee has been working on the issue of cork taint for many years in collaboration with several well-renowned laboratories, in order to detect and prevent the risk with even more accuracy and finesse.

The results and details of this ongoing research have been published in the "Guide for Coopers' Good Practice," available in pdf format on the Federation's website (<http://www.tonneliersdefrance.fr/>).

At the same time, for more than ten years, the individual coopers have made a strong commitment to research this matter. Their dedication of time and resources has enabled a containment of the TCA risk, and led to further developed skills and methods to deal with the issue. They are pleased with the continued evolution of knowledge on the subject and eagerly take an active role in the fight against cork taint in the winemaking process.

And they will not see their profession denigrated for questionable and unjustified motives.

(About the Federation: The Federation of French Coopers, or Fédération Française de la Tonnellerie, comprises more than forty French cooperages, representing more than 90% of the industry. Members include tonnelleries Taransaud, Radoux, Saury, Vicard, Seguin Moreau, François Frères and many more.)

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