



## SUSTAINABLE VITICULTURE PRACTICES – or how we farm.

At SOUMAH we have a 'supervised control' philosophy in relation to viticulture practices. The French call it Lutte raisonnée or 'reasoned fight'. The basis for this philosophy is to reduce the use of synthetic fertilizers, pesticides, herbicides, and fungicides as these will eventually degrade the soil and make a weaker vine.

This means we endeavour to use natural elemental sprays of Sulphur and copper to fight mildew and reduce synthetic sprays where possible.

It is also about a well managed vine structure that helps reduce spray levels. Our shoot thinning regime is a practice designed to manage yield, balance crop, improve canopy structure and ventilation and reduce the need to spray. Therefore when we do spray we can select a softer option as the canopy structure provides better natural ventilation and coverage for copper and Sulphur (both are classed as protectant or cover sprays as they do not enter the plant)

The reduction of sprays not only contributes to the health of the vines and the greater ecosystem, but also to the health of the winegrowers.

We have experimented to reduce herbicides by mulching the vine row and the success of this will see us continue to deploy mulching on a progressive basis across the entire vineyard. This has the combined benefit of reducing evaporation in the summer and promoting a softer and more sustainable soil profile.

Further programmes include;

A. Healthy Sustainable Soil Strategy:

1. Permanent vine row cover crop
2. The preference for natural fertilizer products
3. Reducing herbicide spraying to a minimum
4. Side throw slashing places grass cuttings undervine to boost soil organic levels and improve soil moisture retention
5. Tilling a section of the vineyard every winter as to reduce soil compaction and promote soil health.
6. Mowing every second row only (in seasons where this is possible) to promote insect populations.
7. Invested in a double-row sprayer that reduces compaction of soil as it does not have to travel down every row during each spray. Also reduces use of diesel.
8. 95% Organic Fertilizer used which is specifically made and blended for the property from Hybrid Ag
9. Seaweed & mushroom compost used on a rotating basis throughout the vineyard
10. Soil & petiole samples taken as required to monitor health of soil and vines

### **SOUMAH of YARRA VALLEY**

Soumah Pty Ltd ABN 33 130 649 231  
18 Hexham Road, Gruyere, Victoria 3770 Australia  
PO Box 260, Coldstream, Victoria 3770 Australia  
T +61 3 5962 4716 F +61 3 8678 1025 W [www.soumah.com.au](http://www.soumah.com.au)

B. Good Chemical Practices and Timings

1. Targeted chemicals to ensure beneficial insects remain in the vineyard environment such as *Transform* specifically targeted at mealy bug
2. Spray timings are monitored closely and in an around weather events
3. Use of Bio-pest oils, Aminostim & fertile veg, micro nutrients
4. Using drum muster for chemical container recycling

C. Water Management Strategies

1. Monitor water requirements & timings through moisture probes so soil is not allowed to dry out during the growing season but also not overwatered as well.
2. Drainage System captures water on property and diverted to Dam – no need for regular River pumping
3. Automatic watering system, allows us to water during the night-time, using off-peak electricity & also achieving more effective take up by the plant
4. Selecting drought Resistant rootstock on which to grow our vines means less use of water

D. Pest & Disease

1. Diligent program in place for monitoring pests and diseases including use of consultants
2. Phylloxera protocols in place,
  - All equipment coming onto the property from outside contractors is heat treated
  - All people entering the vineyard must follow Phylloxera protocols
3. 50% of Vineyard now moved to Phylloxera resistant root stock
4. Ongoing program of cordon replacement to freshen the vine and keep it in top health and production (Lessen Eutypa or dead arm disease)

E. Environment

1. Sheep in winter – saves on a herbicide round and mowing
2. Sheep add own fertilizer and builds up organic matter
3. Netting against bird damage & also the use gas guns reduces need for more dramatic intervention.
4. Trees on fence lines chipped on site and mulch used in the cellar door gardens
5. Recycle glass and cardboard from cellar-door in local recycling program
6. Coffee grounds recycled go onto the gardens
7. Wood for the cellar door fire is sourced on-site from fallen trees

Some growers use these as a first steps towards full organic farming. Others find it a happy medium between conventional methods and the stricter demands dictated by organic certifying agencies and it is this second philosophy or ‘supervised control’ that we deploy.