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Approximately 600 Attend Rootstock Symposium in Napa Valley

by [Kerana Todorov \(/search/?q=kerana%20todorov&sort=document-date\)](/search/?q=kerana%20todorov&sort=document-date)

November 15, 2019



Dr. Olga Barbosa discusses conservation ecology in Chile during a panel at Rootstock in Napa. About 600 people attended on Thursday Rootstock, a show the Napa Valley Grapegrowers puts on at Napa Valley Expo Center in Napa



The wine industry and scientists can collaborate to preserve biodiversity in the fight against climate change.

One key is to develop trust between researchers and producers and find workable solutions.

These were among the observations Dr. Olga Barbosa, a scientist at the Universidad Austral de Chile in Valdivia, Chile, made in Napa during a discussion on the role of the wine industry in protecting biodiversity.

Barbosa spoke at Rootstock, an event organized by Napa Valley Grapegrowers at Napa Valley Expo.

Altogether about 600 people attended the symposium which included other panels focusing on other issues such as vine

diseases.

The Institute of Ecology and Biodiversity and Universidad Austral de Chile want to show that biodiversity conservation and the wine industry are compatible. The goal was to manage biodiversity not only in protected areas but also in developed agricultural land such as a planted vineyard.

“We think that wine has a great opportunity to be a leader on climate change,” Barbosa said.

Barbosa described a journey that began a decade ago as scientists joined forces with Central Chile wine growers to find workable solutions in protecting ecosystems. The industry’s Mediterranean-climate region – like other regions with a Mediterranean climate – was home to endemic population with little protection and was under threat.

One challenge was earning trust from producers. The questions raised had to be relevant both to the scientific researchers and to the agricultural community, all in an effort to develop workable solutions to preserve ecosystems that provide such benefits as pollination, natural pest control and wild yeasts and lactic bacteria.

The scientists and producers identified the need to develop native cover crop for the vineyards to replace the beautiful but non-native and ubiquitous California poppies.

With time, the group has established good practices based on research.

Knowledge gained during the research was shared at workshops. Science projects such as practical lessons on soil compaction were also developed for school students.

The planet is “one marvelous and complex” system where all its components are connected, Barbosa said.

“Everything is connected.”

Julien Gervreau, vice president of sustainability at Jackson Family Wines introduced Barbosa.

Jackson Family Wines is testing carbon sequestration at its Saralee’s Vineyard in Windsor. The family-owned wine company has been working with Sonoma Resource Conservation District on the project funded thanks to a grant from the California Department of Food and Agriculture.

The company wants to implement soil health building practices to mitigate climate change and ultimately increase the vineyards’ water-holding capacity. Jackson Family Wines wants to figure how it can sequester more carbon than it emits. Eventually, the company wants to scale the experiment to all the land it farms.

The industry not only has to adapt to a rapidly changing climate, Gervreau said. It also has to mitigate to avoid the worst effects of climate change, he said.

“This is a call to action,” Gervreau said.

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Website:

www.napagrowers.org (<http://www.napagrowers.org>)

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