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Yet another Italian Wine Scandal - Amarone

Report Categories:

Agriculture in the News

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Report Highlights:

While Italian Minister of Agriculture Luca Zaia continues to publicly tout his “zero tolerance” attitude when it comes to food frauds, adulteration, and illegal manufacturing practices, one of Italy’s leading wine – Amarone – is the center of a fraud investigation (again).

General Information:

Italian Minister of Agriculture Luca Zaia continues to publicly tout his “zero tolerance” attitude when it comes to food frauds, adulteration, and illegal manufacturing practices in Italy.

The latest wine scandal unveiled by the Italian Ministry of Agriculture Inspectors from the ICQ

(Istituto Controllo Qualita' – Food and Drink Quality Control Institute) and the Guardia Forestale (MinAg police force) is Operation “Amarone ter.” On September 2, 2009 in the town of Fara Novarese, Province of Novara, Italian authorities seized 200,000 fake Amarone di Valpolicella wine labels, 10,000 fake wine band capsules and false documents that were used since 2007 to produce more than 1,200,000 bottles of fake Amarone, worth more than 2.5 million Euros (\$3.6 million USD).

According to the Italian authorities, the wine was being counterfeited through the use of fake wine labels. A very well known Fara Novarese winery (whose name is being withheld by the Italian authorities) was illegally bottling and labeling fake Amarone wine that was then shipped to a distributor in Denmark, and subsequently sold to a large Danish retail chain.

The fake Amarone and Ripasso wines were being produced with a mix of Valpolicella grapes, imported table wine from France (60 percent) combined with Italian table wine (40 percent) for an estimated total production of 952,084 liters.

This is not the first time that the Ministry of Agriculture has seized fake Amarone wine. Back in September 2008, Italian papers gave widespread coverage to the seizure at the port of Livorno of 15,000 bottles of Amarone that was found to be falsely labeled and allegedly not produced following strict DOCG regulation requirements, and 15,000 bottles of an unspecified red wine. The seized wine was set to be shipped to the United States and was believed to be part of more than 150,000 bottles illegally produced in the Veneto region.

For previous Post reporting on Italian Wine Scandals please see:

- IT8025-Amarone Wine Fraud
- IT8009-Brunello di Montalcino Wine Scandal
- IT8010-Adulterated Wine Scandal
- IT8014-Test Results of Adulterated Wine
- IT8020-Update on the Brunello Scandal
- IT8043-AG Ministry Extends Brunello Decree