

Water for winemaking an issue during drought

By Mike Dunne, Sacramento Bee

If you have one of those “Save Water Drink Wine” bumper stickers on your car, you might want to rip it off.

And not only because the wit is so lame.

The advice is erroneous. In this time of drought, a bumper sticker urging fellow motorists to “Save Water Drink Water” makes more sense.

After all, 29 gallons of water were used to produce that glass of cabernet sauvignon you look forward to drinking with tonight’s dinner.

That, at least, is the calculation of the Water Footprint Network, a nonprofit foundation in the Netherlands that advocates for more sustainable, efficient and fair ways to use water.

Mesfin Mekonnen, a postdoctoral researcher at the University of Twente in the Netherlands, and a Water Footprint associate involved in compiling data, said via email that the 29-gallon figure was based on such factors as rainfall, irrigation and water used in cellars during winemaking.

In California vineyards and cellars, is 29 gallons of water to produce a single glass of wine a realistic estimate?

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