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Pre-Investment Economic Model for CO₂-Based Adaptive Temperature Regulation in Wine Fermentation

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Abstract. Alcoholic fermentation ties up vessel capacity and consumes labour, energy, and corrective inputs; sluggish or stuck batches may also reduce contribution margin through rework, delayed turnover, or quality markdown. This article develops a pre-investment economic model for CO₂-based adaptive temperature regulation in wine fermentation. The evidence combines a targeted review of research available by 31 December 2025 with document-based analysis of eight Chardonnay fermentations described in an unpublished 2025 R&D report. All six adaptive trials reached a report-defined dry endpoint, while both non-feedback comparison trials showed adverse kinetics; however, temperature exposure, yeast strain, and juice handling were not matched, and the report contains no numerical raw dataset. The economic model defines equivalent annual net benefit as $\Delta\Pi = A + L + K + Q + E - C_{sys}(M)$. Direct event loss is decomposed across mutually exclusive fermentation-outcome classes, $A = N \sum p_{0k} r_k L_k$, and annual total cost of ownership is allowed to increase with the number of equipped vessels M . For a single event class, the A-only break-even rule becomes $r^* = \lambda/q$, where $q = Np_0$ and $\lambda = C_{sys}/L_f$; break-even on this component alone is feasible only when $q \geq \lambda$. Thus scale does not automatically improve project economics: additional batches reduce the required effect only when expected loss exposure grows faster than system cost. A second decision rule uses the expected value of sample information to determine whether a prospective field validation is worth its cost. The proposed dataset links each batch to event class, residual sugar, labour, vessel-days, quality, cooling electricity, chiller performance, and system ownership cost. The model converts sparse technical evidence into testable economic thresholds without substituting hypothetical ROI for unobserved cash flows.

Keywords: wine production economics, alcoholic fermentation, adaptive temperature regulation, carbon dioxide monitoring, break-even analysis, total cost of ownership, vessel capacity, value of information.

Модель попередньої оцінки інвестиційної доцільності адаптивного регулювання температури бродіння за даними CO₂

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Анотація. Спиртове бродиння пов'язане із зайнятістю виробничих ємностей, витратами праці та енергії, а уповільнене чи зупинене бродиння може спричиняти додаткові витрати на коригувальні операції, затримку обороту ємностей і зниження вартості продукції. У статті розроблено економічну модель попередньої оцінки інвестиційної доцільності адаптивного регулювання температури бродиння за даними про виділення CO₂. Інформаційну основу становлять вибіркового тематичний огляд досліджень, доступних до 31 грудня 2025 року, і документальний аналіз восьми випадків бродиння суслу сорту Шардоне, описаних у неопублікованому звіті про НДДКР 2025 року. Усі шість дослідів з адаптивним регулюванням було виброджено до сухого стану за критерієм вихідного звіту, тоді як в обох порівняльних дослідях без регулювання за сигналом CO₂ зафіксовано несприятливу кінетику. Водночас температурні режими, штами дріжджів і обробка суслу не були зіставними, а числовий первинний масив відсутній. Економічна модель визначає еквівалентний річний чистий ефект як $\Delta\Pi = A + L + K + Q + E - C_{sys}(M)$. Прямі втрати розкладено за взаємовиключними класами результату бродиння: $A = N \sum p_{0k} r_k L_k$, а еквівалентні річні витрати на володіння системою залежать від кількості оснащених ємностей M . Для одного класу подій критерій беззбитковості за складовою A набуває вигляду $r^* = \lambda/q$, де $q = N p_0$, $\lambda = C_{sys}/L_f$; здійсненість такого сценарію потребує $q \geq \lambda$. Отже, збільшення масштабу саме по собі не гарантує кращої економіки: поріг знижується лише тоді, коли очікувані втрати зростають швидше за витрати на систему. Додатково запропоновано використання очікуваної цінності вибіркової інформації для рішення про доцільність польової валідації. Для подальшого розрахунку потрібен облік у розрізі партій: клас події, залишковий цукор, праця, резервуаро-дні, показники якості, електроенергія охолодження, COP холодильної установки та повні витрати на володіння системою.

Ключові слова: економіка виноробства, спиртове бродиння, адаптивне регулювання температури, моніторинг CO₂, аналіз беззбитковості, сукупна вартість володіння, використання ємностей, цінність інформації.

Introduction

Relevance of the problem. Alcoholic fermentation uses scarce winery resources: tank time, labour, cooling capacity, nutrients, and management attention. Slow or incomplete fermentations can extend vessel occupancy and require corrective work, while quality defects may reduce saleable value. Ukrainian studies place winery digitalisation within management development and competitiveness [1; 2]; a broader agro-industrial study likewise treats resource-efficient technological renewal as a competitiveness factor [3]. For fermentation control, the investment question is process-specific: whether the incremental cash-flow benefit generated by better decisions is sufficient to recover the annual cost of sensing, integration, actuation, maintenance, and data handling.

Analysis of recent research and publications. Giovenzana et al. compared automated and conventional fermentation management using fermentation duration, labour, nutrients, oxygen, water, energy, and variable costs, and found that the economic result depended on winery scale [4]. Girotto et al. argued that centralised process data can help identify resource inefficiencies in winery operations [5]. Advanced-process-control research supplies the financial logic: technical improvement must be translated into incremental cash flows and compared with project cost [6; 7]. Howard's information-value theory adds the decision dimension by valuing information according to the economic consequences of the decisions it changes [8]. Enterprise-level evidence from French organic wineries also associates digitalisation with financial performance, although it does not identify the effect of fermentation control [9].

Technical research has expanded the available monitoring and control options. Reviews cover sensors for oenological processes and commercial fermentation monitoring [10; 11];

CO₂-rate-based control has been modelled explicitly [12]; SmartBarrel and Winnie illustrate multi-sensor and modular monitoring systems [13; 14]; and a low-cost IoT device demonstrated real-time CO₂ monitoring for detecting stuck fermentation at laboratory scale [15]. A dataset of 222 commercial red-wine fermentations shows why a simple temperature narrative is insufficient: summary temperature measures did not significantly predict successful completion across that dataset [16]. Energy and tank-management studies further show that temperature policy changes both heat-removal requirements and production scheduling [17–20]. Classic enological work describes the multiple causes of stuck and sluggish fermentations [21], while online CO₂-based kinetic prediction predates current digital platforms [23; 24].

Identification of the unresolved part of the problem. The literature provides sensors, fermentation models, energy methods, and general economic assessment tools, but it does not provide a compact winery-level rule that links a prespecified fermentation outcome to its incremental cash-flow consequence, allows system cost to vary with the number of equipped vessels, and states when the expected technical effect can reach break-even. This gap is important when technical evidence is limited to pilot observations and the winery must decide whether a larger validation study is economically worth conducting.

Purpose of the article. The purpose is to develop a pre-investment economic model for CO₂-based adaptive temperature regulation that links fermentation outcome classes with direct event losses, labour, vessel capacity, quality, energy, and annual total cost of ownership, and to derive decision rules for both equipment adoption and prospective field validation.

Scientific novelty. The contribution is an application-specific extension of established process-control economics: event losses are separated by outcome class, total cost of ownership is allowed to contain fixed and per-vessel components, the break-even condition is expressed as a feasibility boundary, and the next validation stage is evaluated through the value of sample information.

Practical significance. A winery can use the model with its own production records to determine whether break-even is attainable, identify which missing measurements affect the decision most, and design a field trial that produces the labour, capacity, quality, energy, and reliability data required for a full investment appraisal.

Methodology

Research methods. The study combines a targeted narrative review, document-based descriptive analysis of reported trial outcomes, and process-economic modelling. Google Scholar and publisher platforms were searched with combinations of “wine fermentation monitoring”, “CO₂ fermentation control”, “stuck sluggish fermentation”, “fermentation energy”, “process control economics”, “value of information”, and “wine production economics”. Peer-reviewed studies were retained when they addressed fermentation monitoring or control, resource use, industrial control economics, or investment decisions. Ukrainian-language studies on winery management and agro-industrial competitiveness were additionally screened to retain the domestic economic context [1–3].

Data sources. The pilot evidence comes from I. Burdinskyi's unpublished 2025 R&D report, “Feedback Control of White Wine Fermentation Kinetics: Experimental Development of an Adaptive CO₂-Based Real-Time Fermentation-Rate Control” [22]. The document describes eight Chardonnay fermentations, including six adaptive trials and two comparison trials without CO₂-based feedback, with plotted trajectories, interventions, and endpoint descriptions. It provides no numerical observation-level dataset; batch duration, energy use, and within-batch variability therefore remain unavailable. The literature base comprises peer-reviewed economic, engineering, and oenological studies [1–21; 23–26].

Analytical tools. Pilot outcomes were coded from the wording of the report; silence was not interpreted as evidence that an event was absent. For prospective validation, outcome classes must be defined before data collection. A practical severity scheme is: normal

completion; sluggish fermentation that completes without restart; and stuck fermentation requiring restart or reinoculation. The final dry-wine endpoint should be confirmed analytically by glucose plus fructose rather than by hydrometer alone; the OIV defines dry wine as no more than 4 g/L, or up to 9 g/L under its acidity condition [26]. Capital expenditure is converted to an equivalent annual amount with a capital-recovery factor. Unless a winery applies its own tax model, the screening equations are stated in real, pre-tax terms, so the discount rate and cash-flow inputs must be expressed on the same basis.

Research limitations. The documentary pilot is small, heterogeneous, and not randomised; the two comparison fermentations were later warmed, so feedback and thermal exposure are not isolated. Trial 1.1 has no explicit sluggish/stuck classification, and laboratory residual sugar was not reported. The pilot is therefore used to identify event types, not to estimate event probabilities or treatment effects. The economic model is uncalibrated until winery-specific cost, utilisation, and reliability data are supplied.

Results

The 2025 report monitored outlet CO₂ in all eight Chardonnay fermentations. Adaptive vessels used the gas-flow signal to select temperature within preset bounds. The two comparison vessels did not use fermentation rate to determine temperature, but both were subsequently warmed; they are therefore described here as non-feedback comparisons rather than fixed-setpoint controls. Temperatures are converted to degrees Celsius in Table 1. The report's early target was about 0.5 °Brix/day until approximately 11 °Brix, followed by a target near 1 °Brix/day subject to an upper temperature of 17.8 °C [22].

Table 1

Outcomes reported for the eight Chardonnay fermentations in the 2025 pilot

Trial	Fermentation and control mode	Temperature policy	Reported outcome
1.0	Spontaneous, hyperoxidised juice; non-feedback comparison	14.4 °C initially; later warmed	Stopped near 5 °Brix; reinoculated afterwards
1.1	Spontaneous, hyperoxidised; adaptive	14.4-17.8 °C	Report-defined dry endpoint; no H ₂ S recorded; sluggish/stuck status not explicitly stated
1.2	Spontaneous, reductively handled; adaptive	14.4-17.8 °C	Report-defined dry endpoint; no sluggish phase or H ₂ S recorded
1.3	Spontaneous, reductively handled; adaptive	14.4-17.8 °C	Report-defined dry endpoint; no sluggish phase or H ₂ S recorded
2.0	Q-Citrus, inoculated; non-feedback comparison	about 11.1 °C early; later warmed	Completed after a sluggish late phase and additional operator attention
2.1	Q-Citrus, inoculated; adaptive	12.2-17.8 °C	Regular kinetics and report-defined dry endpoint; no H ₂ S detected
2.2	Q-Citrus, inoculated; adaptive	11.1-17.8 °C	Regular kinetics and report-defined dry endpoint; no sluggish phase or H ₂ S recorded
2.3	Selectys L'Elegante, inoculated; adaptive	11.1-17.8 °C	Report-defined dry endpoint after reductive H ₂ S-associated off-odour near 12 °Brix and a sluggish late phase

Source: compiled by the author from [22].

All six adaptive trials reached a report-defined dry endpoint. Four adaptive trials were explicitly described as having regular kinetics or no sluggish phase; Trial 1.1 reached the reported endpoint but its sluggish/stuck status was not explicitly stated, and Trial 2.3 had a sluggish terminal phase after a reductive H₂S-associated off-odour. Trial 2.3 also used a different yeast strain, so the odour event cannot be attributed to the feedback policy. The two non-feedback comparisons showed adverse kinetics. Because yeast, juice handling, and thermal exposure differed, these observations do not isolate the value of CO₂ information from the effect of temperature itself.

Each monetised consequence is assigned to one incremental benefit category. This prevents the same labour minute, tank-day, quality markdown, or kilowatt-hour from entering more than one term (Table 2).

Table 2

Incremental benefit categories and total-cost-of-ownership inputs

Economic component	Symbol	Measurement basis	Incremental cash-flow rule
Direct event losses	A	Baseline probability and verified reduction for each prespecified outcome class; corrective materials, rework, disposal, other direct costs	Includes only direct event costs not entered in L, K, Q, or E
Labour and monitoring	L	Sampling/intervention time, labour rate, laboratory and monitoring consumables	Incremental labour and consumable change attributable to adoption
Released vessel capacity	K	Change in vessel-days × marginal contribution of capacity actually usable for additional saleable production	Zero when capacity is not binding or extra throughput has no positive contribution margin
Quality and markdown	Q	Rejected or discounted volume, price/contribution difference, verified chemical and sensory outcome	Positive or negative; excludes costs already included in A
Energy	E	Cooling/heating electricity × tariff; heat-removal data converted through measured chiller COP where necessary	Positive or negative under the actual thermal policy
Annual total cost of ownership	Csys(M)	Annualised fixed and per-vessel CAPEX plus fixed and per-vessel OPEX, calibration, maintenance, data/support, training, downtime-related service cost	Charged once as the equivalent annual cost of the adopted configuration

Source: developed by the author.

The equivalent annual net benefit of adoption is:

$$\Delta\Pi = A + L + K + Q + E - C_{\text{sys}}(M) \quad (1),$$

where $\Delta\Pi$ is the equivalent annual net benefit; A is the expected reduction in direct costs caused by defined fermentation outcome classes; L is the change in labour and monitoring

consumables; K is the marginal contribution from usable vessel capacity; Q is the monetised change in product quality; E is the change in energy cost; and $C_{sys}(M)$ is the equivalent annual total cost of ownership for M equipped vessels.

$$C_{sys}(M) = CRF(i, T) \times (F_{cap} + c_{cap}M) + F_{opex} + c_{ope}M \quad (2),$$

where F_{cap} and F_{opex} are fixed capital and recurring costs, c_{cap} and c_{ope} are per-vessel capital and recurring costs, i is the real discount rate, T is useful life in years, and $CRF(i, T) = i(1+i)^T / [(1+i)^T - 1]$. This specification does not assume economies of scale: they arise only if expected economic exposure grows faster than total system cost.

$$A = N \times \sum_k p_{0k} \times r_k \times L_k \quad (3),$$

where N is annual batch count; k indexes mutually exclusive outcome classes; p_{0k} is the baseline probability of class k ; r_k is the relative reduction in that class attributable to adoption; and L_k is the direct event loss not already entered in L , K , Q , or E . L_k may depend on batch volume, so larger tanks can increase the loss exposure per event.

For a single event class, let $q = Np_0$ be the expected number of events per year and $\lambda = C_{sys}/L_f$, where L_f is the direct loss per event. The A-only break-even condition is:

$$r^* = \lambda / q \quad (4).$$

Table 3

Feasibility map for the direct-event-loss break-even screen

Expected events per year q	$\lambda = 0.5$	$\lambda = 1.0$	$\lambda = 2.0$
0.5	100%	Infeasible	Infeasible
1	50%	100%	Infeasible
2	25%	50%	100%
5	10%	20%	40%
10	5%	10%	20%

Source: author calculations; $r^* = \lambda/q$. Values above 100% are infeasible on A alone.

The table separates two composite drivers that matter for the single-event screen: expected event count q and the cost-to-loss ratio λ . For example, $\lambda = 1$ requires complete elimination of one expected event per year when $q = 1$, but only a 20% reduction when $q = 5$. If $q < \lambda$, avoided direct event loss cannot repay the system even at $r = 1$; economic justification would then require positive contributions from L , K , Q , or E , a lower ownership cost, or a larger loss per event.

A full appraisal requires the batch-linked production and accounting records in Table 4. The dataset separates event frequency from event severity, records the number of equipped vessels M , and converts heat-removal requirements into electricity through the measured coefficient of performance (COP) of the refrigeration system.

Table 4

Minimum dataset for winery-level economic validation

Data block	Unit of observation	Required variables	Economic output
Outcome definition and chemistry	Each batch	Initial °Brix; planned completion horizon; prespecified sluggish/stuck rule; laboratory glucose + fructose at endpoint; event class	Baseline p_{0k} and verified r_k
Batch scale and equipment scope	Tank/batch/season	Batch volume; vessel ID and capacity; annual batch count N ; number of equipped vessels M	Loss scaling $L_k(V)$; cost scaling $C_{sys}(M)$
Interventions	Each event	Type, timing, materials, dose, labour	Direct event

		time, reason	cost within L_k
Labour and sampling	Each batch	Number of samples/interventions; minutes; labour rate; consumables	Labour component L
Energy	Tank/batch	Temperature trajectory; cooling/heating electricity; heat removed if available; chiller COP; tariff	Energy component E
Capacity	Tank/season	Tank-days; utilisation; queue; feasible additional throughput; contribution margin	Capacity component K
Quality	Each batch	Residual sugar; chemical indicators; blinded sensory score; markdown/rejection	Quality component Q
Digital system	Installation/year	Fixed and per-vessel CAPEX/OPEX; useful life; real discount rate; integration; calibration; repair; data/support; training; downtime	Annual $C_{sys}(M)$, full $\Delta\Pi$, NPV/payback after validation

Source: developed by the author.

The field-validation decision can also be valued. Let V_a denote the economic value of action a (for example, adopt or do not adopt) and D the prospective trial data. The expected value of sample information is $EVSI = E_D[\max_a E(V_a|D)] - \max_a E(V_a)$. A prospective validation has positive information value when $EVSI$ exceeds the incremental cost and disruption of the trial [8]. This rule directs measurement effort toward uncertainties capable of changing the investment decision rather than toward data collection for its own sake.

Discussion

Interpretation of the results. The feasibility condition $q \geq \lambda$ defines the boundary at which avoided direct event losses can recover annual system cost. For a single outcome class, the result depends on two composite quantities: expected annual event count $q = Np_0$ and the cost-to-loss ratio $\lambda = C_{sys}/L_f$. Scale therefore has no automatic economic sign. A larger annual batch count can reduce the required effect, while a larger number of equipped vessels raises $C_{sys}(M)$, and larger batch volume can increase L_k . The pilot is used to identify economically relevant event types because temperature exposure, yeast strain, and juice handling were not matched across trials. A winery-level decision therefore requires class-specific baseline frequencies, direct losses, labour, vessel-capacity effects, quality outcomes, energy use, and total cost of ownership measured under comparable operating conditions.

Comparison with other studies. The proposed model extends existing fermentation-economic studies to the pre-investment stage. Giovenzana et al. [4] evaluated automated fermentation management using observed duration, labour, inputs, energy, and variable costs and showed that winery scale affected the economic result; the present model addresses the earlier decision point when enterprise data are still incomplete by expressing the break-even requirement as $q \geq \lambda$ and allowing system cost to vary with the number of equipped vessels. Nelson et al. [16], using 222 commercial red-wine fermentations, found no significant relationship between summary temperature measures and successful completion, which supports prospective estimation of r_k instead of inference from the small Chardonnay pilot. Giovenzana et al. [17], Celorrio et al. [18], Yabo and Casenave [19], and Goelzer et al. [20] show that energy and tank-management effects are measurable but context-dependent. Cañete-Carmona et al. [15] and Winnie [14] demonstrate practical CO_2 -based or modular monitoring options, while El Haloui et al. [23] and Perret and Corrieu [24] establish the historical precedent

for online CO₂-based kinetic monitoring. Against this literature, the present result is the economic linkage between defined fermentation outcomes, incremental cash-flow effects, scalable ownership cost, and the evidence required before adoption.

Scientific novelty. The scientific contribution is an application-specific extension of process-control economics to the preliminary evaluation of CO₂-based fermentation regulation under sparse technical evidence. Direct event losses are decomposed by mutually exclusive outcome classes, $A = N \times \sum p_{0k} r_k L_k$, while total cost of ownership is specified as $C_{sys}(M)$ with fixed and per-vessel capital and operating components. For a single outcome class, the model yields the feasibility condition $q \geq \lambda$, separating cases in which direct avoided losses can theoretically cover system cost from cases that require additional positive labour, capacity, quality, or energy effects. EVSI is incorporated as a criterion for deciding whether a controlled field validation is economically worth conducting before commercial adoption.

Practical significance. The model can be used by a winery as a staged pre-investment decision tool. Management first calculates the A-only feasibility boundary from observed frequencies of prespecified stuck or sluggish fermentation events, direct loss per event, and a credible annual total cost of ownership. Batch-level records can then quantify labour, vessel-capacity, quality, and energy effects without double counting; cooling-energy calculations should use actual electricity consumption or heat-removal data converted through measured chiller COP. EVSI can subsequently determine whether the expected value of a controlled validation study exceeds its cost and operational disruption. Commercial adoption is justified only when field data support a positive equivalent annual net benefit under sensitivity analysis for event frequency, loss size, vessel count, batch volume, system lifetime, discount rate, energy tariff, COP, downtime, and capacity utilisation.

Conclusions

The documentary pilot shows that all six adaptive Chardonnay trials reached the report-defined dry endpoint, while the two non-feedback comparisons had adverse kinetics. Because thermal exposure, yeast strain, and juice handling were not matched, the pilot identifies economically relevant event types but does not estimate a treatment effect. The economic model separates direct event loss from labour, vessel capacity, quality, and energy, and allows annual total cost of ownership to contain fixed and per-vessel components. For one event class, the A-only rule $r^* = \lambda/q$ is feasible only when the expected annual event count q is at least as large as the cost-to-loss ratio λ .

Winery scale has no automatic sign. More annual batches can lower the break-even effect, but more equipped vessels raise system cost and larger tanks change the loss per event. The net scale effect must be calculated from N , M , batch volume, event probabilities, and incremental cash flows. A field validation should use prespecified outcome classes, laboratory residual-sugar endpoints, comparable thermal policies, batch-level labour and capacity records, metered cooling electricity with chiller COP, quality outcomes, and complete total-cost-of-ownership data. EVSI provides a decision rule for whether collecting those data is itself economically worthwhile. Further research should calibrate the model prospectively across wineries and vintages, estimate class-specific p_{0k} , r_k , and L_k , and test whether CO₂-based feedback adds value beyond monitoring alone under matched thermal exposure. With those data, the screening model can be extended to NPV, payback, after-tax cash flows, and probabilistic sensitivity analysis without changing the underlying incremental-cash-flow structure.

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