An analysis of underlying relationships between factors related to operating costs and revenue in Australian vineyards.

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Abstract

The Australian wine industry is a major part of Australia's agricultural sector. As global demands change and new pressures on the industry present themselves, a more sustainable approach is needed. Through a nationwide data set, collected over ten years, we link key variables in determining vineyard operational costs and revenue through the use of XGBoost. We use a measure of relative importance to show the interrelated nature of these variables and the comparative influence they have on one another. We present these connections through the use of Sankey and Chord diagrams to show the important predictors of revenue and operating costs and their strong interrelatedness. Furthermore, we connect these variables to different wine regions, highlighting the complex influence of location on the use of different resources. The study provides valuable insights into the multifaceted dynamics governing operational costs and revenue, illustrating how factors such as water and fuel use impacts on operational costs and how different seasonal events affect these operations.

1. Introduction

Historically strong demands for Australian wine have helped to create a thriving industry. However, recent pressures brought on by a loss of tourism and labour due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the global freight crisis, war in Europe, tariffs and rising inflation have negatively affected the industry's outlook (Wine Australia, 2021; Australia, 2021a). The 2021-2022 financial year alone saw a decline of 19% in exports solely due to tariffs (Wine Australia, 2022). A greater understanding of the different underlying conditions leading to improved performance in agricultural productivity and sustainability at scale is key to making data-informed decisions increase a nation's agricultural sustainability (OECD, 2019). Specifically within the Australian wine and vine industry, there is a need to further understand the driving relationships between resource use and economic output, which can help to determine more cost effective and efficient methods and develop benchmarks with local growers (Luke Mancini, 2020).

An unprecedented amount of data regarding the Australian winegrowing industry has been collected through Sustainable Winegrowing Australia, offering the potential for new insights into the driving economic forces of the Australian wine industry. A major part of the potential for insight within this dataset comes from the incorporation of operating costs and grape revenue from grape sales within the data. In this paper, we use data to study economic outcomes and their statistical relationships to vineyards' utilisation of the resources. We further compare the relationships between different resources to address the extensive collinearity found within the data (Chen and Guestrin, 2016). We adopt a popular, relatively new machine learning method, XGBoost, for this analysis because it is able to overcome multicollinearity as well as highlight the level of importance that predictor variables have on response variables.

2. Methods

2.1. Data

Data used in this analysis were obtained from Sustainable Winegrowing Australia (SWA), Australia's national wine industry sustainability program. SWA aims to support grape growers and winemakers in demonstrating and improving their sustainability (SWA, 2022). Data recorded by SWA are entered manually by winegrowers using a web based interface tool. A total of 6049 observations were collected from 2012/2013 to 2021/2022 financial years, with each observation comprising 23 variables reflecting a vineyard's state for the given year (see Table 2.1).

The data originally contained only two multiclass variables: year and region. For this case study, related binary variables, such as the use of river water and the use of dam water, were combined to create multiclass variables such as water source. Further details about these variables, their classes and their frequency is available in the Appendix.

The variable Region represented one of the 65 Geographical Indicator Regions (GI Region) used to describe different unique localised traits of vineyards across Australia (Halliday, 2009; Oliver et al., 2013; SOAR et al., 2008). Each region is explicitly defined under the Wine Australia Corporation Act of 1980 (Attorney-General's Department, 2010).

Table 1: Summary of variables used in the analysis. The recorded column indicate the number of values that were either greater than zero or that were not missing.

Variable	**Units**	**Recorded**	**Number of Classes**
Water Used	Mega Litres	5846	
Diesel	Litres	5585	
Biodiesel	Litres	25	
LPG	Litres	958	
Herbicide Spray	Times per year	2026	
Year	Class	6049	10
Disease	Class	6049	2
Region	Class	6049	58
Solar	Kilowatt Hours	622	
Irrigation Type	Class	6049	20
Petrol	Litres	4309	
Slashing	Times per year	2290	
Yield	Tonnes	5935	
Irrigation Energy	Class	6049	16
Area Harvested	Hectares	6049	
Electricity	Kilowatt Hours	1014	
Insecticide Spray	Times per year	1092	
Fertiliser	KGs of Nitrogen	795	
Fungicide Spray	Times per year	2260	
Cover Crop	Class	6049	32
Water Type	Class	6049	39
Grape Revenue	AUD	853	
Operating Costs	AUD	853	

2.2. XGBoost

XGBoost (eXtreme Gradient Boosting), described in more detail below (and further in the Appendix), were created using the XGBoost library (Chen and Guestrin, 2016) in the Python Programming language (G. van Rossum, 1995). XGBoost is a type of machine learning method that constructs and ensemble of decision trees to predict or estimate an output variable (the response) based on a number of input variables. The ensemble, can be used to classify classes or predict a continuous response, depending on the nature of the output variable. They were chosen for this analysis as the data contained a mixture of class and continuous variables. Moreover, XGBoost is unaffected by multicollinearity, and offer high predictive performance for a wide variety of purposes, and are capable of identifying and ranking variables and interactions in order of relative importance (Chen and Guestrin, 2016).

Four sets of analyses were conducted. In the first set, two XGBoost models were developed, with operational cost and grape revenue as the response variables. The analysis of operational cost and revenue included all variables in Table 2.1. The second set of analyses focused on identifying relationships between the input variables themselves, creating XGBoost models for each other variable so that every variable would have a measure of its relative importance to every other variable (see Section 2.3). Together these models were used to measure the interrelationships of the ten most important variables in determining operational cost and grape revenue using variable importance. These measures of relative importance were used to illustrate the highly interrelated nature of variables within vineyards. The interaction between variables was depicted through the use of Sankey and Chord diagrams; with variable importance measures being used to show the strength of connection between the respective predictor variables and the response (see section 2.3).

The third analysis was an XGBoost tree with Region as the response variable. The difference for this model was that relative variable importance for each variable would be measured for the overall importance in determining region, as opposed to a variable's connection to each region specifically. The fourth analysis focussed on profit (the difference between revenue and operational costs) and year, however these results were not included due to low average loss values and model stability (see Appendix).

XGBoost is an ensemble method that combines multiple decision trees together to create a more accurate predictive model. The gradient boosting aspect of the ensemble is the use of a loss function to create new decision trees that add to the ensemble, improving its predictive power. The loss function is optimised iteratively to improve upon prior trees. The loss function can be any convex function, allowing gradient descent to traverse the loss space until no substantive improvements can be made via traversal. Because the loss function is only required to be convex, both classifiers and regressors can be used. Regularisation methods can also be incorporated to help prevent over fitting. This makes XGBoost incredibly versatile and accurate, whilst still being interpretable compared to other machine learning methods.

2.3. Variable Importance

XGBoost creates a large number of decision trees in the ensemble, it is hard to directly interpret the model and the derived intricate relationship between the variables. Variable importance can be measured in multiple ways, in this paper we used the frequency of a variable appearing as a node within the ensemble as a measure of its importance. This measure can be interpreted as how often a variable was the optimal choice in reducing the loss function of the ensemble. Multiclass variables are given an importance score for each individual class; for example, in the first set of analyses each specific region will have its own importance score, as will Year, Irrigation Type, etc (see Table 2.1).

The Sankey and Chord diagrams were constructed using the Holoviews python library (Rudiger et al., 2020). Both Chord and Sankey diagrams illustrated variable importance through the size of the bands between two variables. The number at the end of a connection in a Sankey diagram indicates a variable's importance (the number of times it appeared within the ensemble). Sankey and Chord diagrams are presented together; with Sankey diagrams showing the connection of a variable to its ten most important predictor variables and chord diagrams showing the interconnectedness of the ten most prominent variables within its associated Sankey diagram. Chord diagrams formed circles, with variables being connected through their relative importance.

2.4. Validation

The predictive accuracy of each tree was assessed through a validation process. For each model, a sample of 80% of the data was used for training the model and the remaining 20% was used for testing and validation. Categorical data were stratified to conserve the same proportion of class occurrences between the training, testing and validation data. The models were validated using 10 repetitions of the sampling process (10-fold cross validation). R^2 scores were used to determine the best regression models during validation. For analyses with continuous responses R^2 was used instead of RMSE to allow the comparison of models with different units to each other when considering how well each model extrapolated to further data. For binary and multiclass variables, validation was summarised through the accuracy, the proportion of true negatives and positives.

As with most machine learning methods, a key component of the XGBoost model setup was the tuning of hyperparameters. The XGBoost library incorporates regularisation techniques built into the software to mitigate over-fitting and enhance model generalisation. This allowed us to utilise cross validated grid search functions when selecting for better performing hyperparameters. The performance measure for model selection was root-mean-square error for continuous variables. The receiver operator characteristic's area under the curve was used for category variables (Hanley and McNeil, 1982). Multiclass variables utilised the one verse one approach to minimise sensitivity to class disparity (Ferri et al., 2009; Hand and Till, 2001).

3. Results

The below sections present each of the analyses conducted within this study. This includes the three analyses for Revenue, Operational Cost and Region, with the fourth and final analysis on profit and yield presented in the appendix.

3.1. Revenue

The predictive performance of the XGBoost model for revenue performed similarly to operating cost, for achieving an R^2 of 0.77 (with a standard deviation of 0.15).

The most important predictors of revenue were fuel use (petrol 307 and diesel 144), yield (285), size (216) and water use (199). The values attached to each variable indicate the relative importance of the variable (number of times selected in the tree ensemble, see Section 3.1). Overall regions contributed to 234 nodes in the ensemble making them collectively the third most important variable. The chord diagram (see Figure 3.1) illustrates that vineyard area is also of high relative importance to other variables, especially slashing. The overall importance of Area to other variables is evident by its larger circumference within the chord diagram.

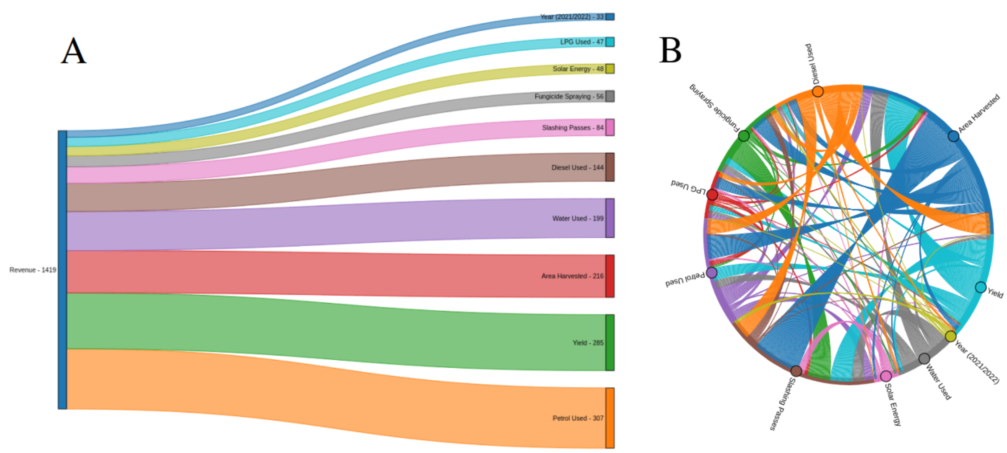

Figure 1: The left-hand side depicts the 10 most important variables in predicting revenue using XGBoost as a measure of node occurrence, using a Sankey diagram. The right-hand side depicts the interrelated importance of the ten predictor variables using a chord diagram.

3.2. Operating Costs

Compared to revenue, the predictive performance of XGBoost model for operating cost was slightly better, with an R^2 of 0.80 (with a standard deviation of 0.10). Similar to revenue, the most iomportant predictors of operating cost were fuel, water, area and yield (see figure 2). A surprising difference was the change in relative importance of activities involving tractor passes where the use of fungicide was more important for operational costs, compared to revenue, where slashing was more important (see Figure 3). The variables that feed into these decisions are also very different with diesel having the highest relative importance to slashing, and area having the greatest relative importance to the need for fungicide.

Again, Region played a determining factor overall, contributing to 334 nodes within the ensemble making it the most important variable when considering all regions together. It was surprising that electricity, slashing and spraying passes were not more prominent in operating costs due to the intrinsic nature as an agricultural expense.

3.3. Region

Region was a highly informative variable based on measures of importance for both operating cost and revenue. As noted above, Region was the third most important variable for determining revenue. The Barossa Valley region and Tasmania were the two most important regions in relation to revenue; these two regions are considered to be some of the highest revenue per hectare regions in Australia (Wine Australia, 2022). These two regions are also relative opposites in winegrowing climates with the Barossa having a warm

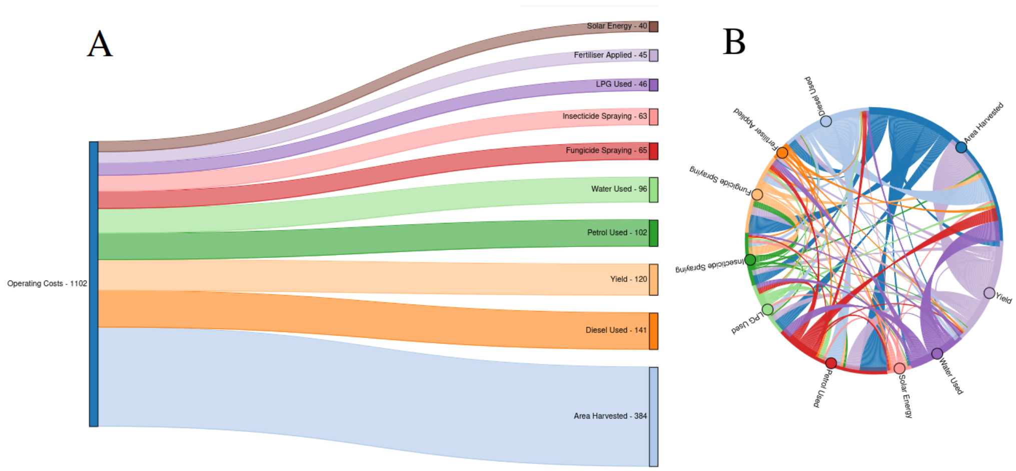

Figure 2: The left-hand side, A, depicts the 10 most important variables in predicting Operating Costs using XGBoost as a measure of node occurrence, using a Sankey diagram. The number at the end of each band in the diagram is that variable's importance. The right-hand side, B, depicts the importance of the 10 variables in Sankey diagram relative to one another.

and dry climate focussing on Shiraz grapes and Tasmania having a cool wet climate that favours Pinot.

As also noted, above Region was also a key determinant of operating costs. Again Tasmania was the most important, followed by the Adelaide Hills. In contrast, the regions of highest relative importance were warmer and drier, such as the Barossa and Hunter Valley. The higher relative importance of slashing and fungicide spraying is the likely due to fungal and weed pressure being greater in cooler wetter regions variables than in drier regions.

The XGBoost ensemble for Region achieved an accuracy of 56.82% (and 50.58% validation accuracy). The difference in accuracy compared to the other models is in part due to the large number of classes (58 regions). The ensemble had a great emphasis on area, water, fuel and yield as determining factors (see Figure (3).

Substantially many of the regions had lower reporting rates, resulting in much poorer classification performance. The regions with the most samples performed the best likely due to the disparity in sample sizes. Bordering regions were routinely grouped together and misclassified as the same region. When scrutinising each class explicitly, the two areas that suffered the most from this were the Limestone Coast (cool coastal areas in South Australia) and the warmer inland regions along the Murray Darling.

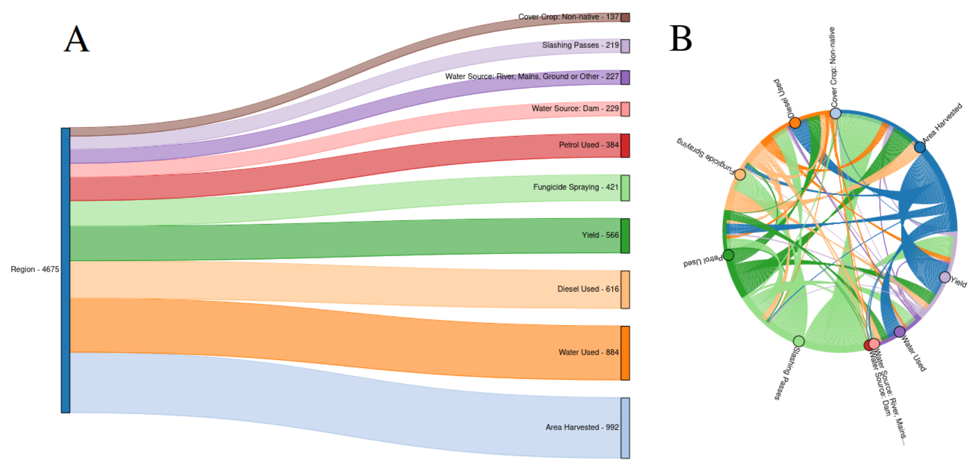

Figure 3: The left-hand side, A, depicts the 10 most important variables in predicting Region using XGBoost as a measure of node occurrence, using a Sankey diagram. The number at the end of each band in the diagram is that variable's importance. The right-hand side, B, depicts the importance of the 10 variables in Sankey diagram relative to one another.

4. Discussion

This study explored the relationships between vineyard resource use, operations and geographical properties to revenue and operating costs. The analysis was based on a large national study of 6049 samples collected over ten years. Three main findings were identified. First, the most important predictors of revenue and operating costs were fuel, yield and area. Secondly, area and fuel were highly interrelated to other variables (see Figure 2 and Figure 3.1A). Finally, the relative importance of predictor variables for Region, differed from Revenue and Operating costs, with Water Use being more prominent than Yield. Region was also more prominent than illustrated in the Sankey diagrams due to the relative importance for operating cost and revenue being calculated for individual regions and not all regions together. In its entirety, was the third most important predictor of revenue and the most important predictor for operating costs, relative to the other variables consideration in the analyses.

Several physical parameters such as climate, geography and soil are predetermined by a vineyard's location, making it a widely considered key determinant of grape yield and quality (Abbal et al., 2016; Agosta et al., 2012; Fraga et al., 2017). The association between yield and region is demonstrated by yield apparing as the fourth most important variable when determining region (see Figure 3).

Warmer regions are known to be beneficial in hastening the ripening process of winegrapes (Webb et al., 2011). Warmer regions are also associated with lower quality grapes, caused largely due to this hastened ripening (Botting et al., 1996). In general warmer regions are not associated with higher yields, but if a vineyard in a warmer region is sufficiently irrigated much higher yields can be achieved than in cooler regions (Camps and Ramos, 2012). It is likely that the combination of larger vineyards with higher water use is a determining factor in classifying regions which favour larger production of grapes; reflected through region using water use so prominently in the XGBoost ensemble. The link to water resources in defining regions is also an important consideration, as vineyards can leverage higher irrigation rates given more accessible water resources. A further consideration in the link between revenue and region is that grape prices are set at a regional level by buyers (Wine Australia, 2022). It is also important to consider that some regions carry particular fame regarding the quality of their produce such as Tasmania, the Hunter Valley and Barossa Valley (Halliday, 2009). This classification can be contrasted with other warmer regions of higher rainfall that use the warmer climate to concentrate their grapes, increasing the flavour profile (Goodwin I, Jerie P, 1992; MG McCarthy et al., 1986).

In part, some winegrowing strategies are restricted simply through access to water resources. Regions are likely to have varying access to different water sources, such as those along the River Murray being able to utilise river water for crops, unlike most coastal regions which may be drawing from surface or underground water sources. Similarly, the connection between region and fuel use is likely an indicator of the level of infrastructure within the region because vineyards in regions without pressurised water will need to use more fuel to pressurise their irrigation systems.

Operational costs showed similar importance across fuel, water and tractor use. The dominating factor of area likely played a large part in determining how costly a tractor pass would be, or in defining the ratio of water applied to the amount of vines. The relative importance was high for area but much lower in general across the other variables, which could indicate the need to be specific when attempting to determine the cause of a operational cost. Although these analyses attempted to capture the complexity between how variables interacted when determining operational costs (see Figure 2), in reality these relationships are likely even more complicated. An example of how interrelated operational costs can be, is the optimisation of tractor passes to achieve multiple goals in a pass, being shown to reduce energy use in vineyards, decreasing running costs, as well as reducing soil compaction (Capello et al., 2019).

When determining revenue, similar variables were used to operational cost; with region also being of high variable importance relative to other variables (when considering all regions together in importance). It is difficult to extrapolate the specific influence of location on a vineyard's outcomes due to the broad and varying definition of a region. Utilising the Geographical Indicator regions defined by Wine Australia (Australia, 2021b) is a limitation in one way, as it is too broad to fully capture a vineyards location and how that influences variables at a more granular level. However, as buyers set prices at regional levels, it is still important to consider this factor.

Decisions made on the ground have far-reaching effects and are difficult to completely capture. A larger number of tractor passes used as a preventative measure for occurrences such as disease may incur higher operational costs but could be critical in preventing long term losses. Although the models demonstrated a good predictive fit (via large R^2 values), the ability to predict operational costs is limited by the variables incorporated in the analysis. Other factors such as erosion and soil health are also influenced by tractor use and would contribute to these operational costs but are difficult to measure and were not available as part of the data (Capello et al., 2019, 2020). Reductions in fuel, water and tractor use are obvious methods to reduce operational costs but not necessarily achievable decisions. Without fully capturing more granular activities for example the specific reasons for fuel use, it is difficult to determine what decisions specifically influence the operational costs.

The reasoning for any particular decision can be widely varying. More sophisticated models, specifically those that utilise expert opinion, may also help to capture and address the decision-making process. An example is the optimisation of fungicide sprays using Bayesian models that forecast disease risk (Lu et al., 2020).

Separately, revenue and operating cost did have a greater predictability than their counterpart profit (see Appendix). The disparity in accuracy between profit and other economic outcomes is reflective of the complexity in trying to address challenges such as climate change, disease and changing market demands (Wine Australia, 2020, 2021, 2022). The difference between turning a profit or loss is dependent on predictable factors unforecasted factors, farming practice and farmers' decisions. The difference between vineyards that make profit and those that do not could be a multitude of factors including differences in farming practices not captured within this study. Some decisions leading to latent effects such as large scale soil deposition in extreme rain events can be caused by soil compaction due to overworking a vineyard (Capello et al., 2020).

5. Conclusion

This study has provided valuable insights into the multifaceted dynamics governing operational costs and revenue. The impact of different regions highlighted the complex interrelatedness of variables within a vineyard. We relate how factors such as water and fuel intersect to impact operational costs and how different seasonal events affect these operations; as well as the significance of context-specific decision-making. While this investigation utilised a broad regional classification, the potential benefits of adopting a more nuanced approach and incorporating expert knowledge have been highlighted. Further work could pursue causal models and the creation of decision support systems. It is difficult to untangle the predictive and correlative nature of a variable compared to the causal reasons. By delving deeper into the complex interplay of variables, further advancements can be made in optimising vineyard management strategies for lowering operational costs, increasing revenue and enhancing sustainability.

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Appendix A. Continuous variables

Table A.2 below shows the ranges of each of the continuous variables:

Table A.2: Summary statistics of continuous variables used in XGBoost models.

	count	mean	std	min	0.25	0.5	0.75	max
Vineyard Solar	622	22916.89	104808	1	1170.75	5500	14866.25	2300000
Biodiesel	25	6635.932	11768.832104	1	200	500	10000	37216
Fungicide Spray	2260	7.724801	3.279794	1	6	7	9	68
LPG	958	327.831399	861.538804	1	40	95.835	240	11950
Petrol	4309	825.276809	1556.621119	1	135	306.66	903	38568
Insecticide Spray	1092	1.707189	1.316042	0	1	1	2	12
Water Used	5846	7301838	558206600	0.0007	13.2655	43	146.875	42680000000
Fertiliser	795	91149.89	483913.4	1	560	4759.5	45148.5	11358000
Diesel	5585	11677.070183	24380.588742	0.1267	1240	3850	12500	591000
Yield	5935	772.902449	2175.113895	0.03	68	192.3	601.8795	72305
Herbicide Spray	2026	2.646199	2.598899	0	2	2	3	103
Slashing	2290	3.311485	1.826788	1	2	3	4	26
Electricity	1014	58223.07	177626.3	0.019	2160	9637	36498.25	3000000
Area Harvested	6049	66.52604	133.4525	2.220446E-16	10.13	24.5	66.8	2436.15
Grape Revenue	875	377972	606286.8	1	76000	172964	386747	5700000
Operating Costs	853	314187.1	511522.6	1	57315	140000	327408	4482828

Appendix B. Categorical Variables

The tables below describe each possible class a multiclass variable could have taken and the frequency that it occured.

Appendix B.1. Water Source Types

Table B.3 below shows the different class types for water sources used by vineyards and their frequency of occurrences.

Table B.3: Frequency and class types of water types used by vineyards.

Water types	**frequency**
river water	1578
groundwater	1433
surface water dam	617
recycled water from other source	386
groundwater and surface water dam	256
not listed	235
mains water	170
river water and groundwater	147
groundwater and recycled water from other source	145
other water	101
river water and surface water dam	92

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Table B.3 – continued from previous page

Water types	**frequency**
groundwater and water applied for frost control	90
groundwater and mains water	76
river water and groundwater and surface water dam	70
recycled water from other source and mains water	63
groundwater and recycled water from other source and mains water	60
river water and mains water	57
surface water dam and mains water	56
groundwater and other water	33
river water and groundwater and mains water	30
groundwater and surface water dam and recycled water from other source	27
river water and water applied for frost control	27
groundwater and surface water dam and mains water	22
surface water dam and recycled water from other source	21

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Table B.3 – continued from previous page

Water types	**frequency**
river water and recycled water from other source	19
river water and other water	19
river water and surface water dam and mains water	18
river water and groundwater and surface water dam and mains water	18
mains water and other water	16
groundwater and surface water dam and water applied for frost control	12
surface water dam and other water	12
groundwater and recycled water from other source and other water	11
groundwater and surface water dam and recycled water from other source and mains water	8
recycled water from other source and mains water and other water	8
river water and recycled water from other source and mains water	8
river water and surface water dam and recycled water from other source	8

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Table B.3 – continued from previous page

Water types	frequency
surface water dam and mains water and other water	7
recycled water from other source and other water	7
river water and groundwater and recycled water from other source	6
groundwater and mains water and other water	5
groundwater and surface water dam and other water	5
groundwater and surface water dam and mains water and other water	5
river water and groundwater and recycled water from other source and mains water	5
river water and groundwater and water applied for frost control	5
river water and surface water dam and water applied for frost control	4
surface water dam and water applied for frost control	4

Continued on next page

Table B.3 – continued from previous page

Water types	**frequency**
river water and groundwater and surface water dam and recycled water from other source and mains water and other water	4
river water and groundwater and recycled water from other source and other water	3
groundwater and surface water dam and recycled water from other source and water applied for frost control	3
river water and groundwater and surface water dam and recycled water from other source	3
river water and recycled water from other source and other water	3
surface water dam and recycled water from other source and mains water	2
river water and recycled water from other source and mains water and water applied for frost control	2

Continued on next page

Table B.3 – continued from previous page

Water types	frequency
groundwater and surface water dam and recycled water from other source and mains water and other water	2
river water and groundwater and mains water and other water	2
river water and groundwater and surface water dam and other water	2
river water and surface water dam and other water	2
river water and mains water and water applied for frost control	2
river water and groundwater and surface water dam and recycled water from other source and mains water	2
river water and mains water and other water	2
river water and surface water dam and mains water and other water	2
river water and groundwater and mains water and water applied for frost control	1

Continued on next page

Table B.3 – continued from previous page

Water types	**frequency**
surface water dam and other water and water applied for frost control	1
water applied for frost control	1
groundwater and other water and water applied for frost control	1
other water and water applied for frost control	1
groundwater and surface water dam and recycled water from other source and other water and water applied for frost control	1
mains water and water applied for frost control	1
groundwater and surface water dam and recycled water from other source and other water	1
groundwater and mains water and water applied for frost control	1
river water and groundwater and surface water dam and mains water and other water	1

Continued on next page

Table B.3 – continued from previous page

Water types	**frequency**
river water and surface water dam and recycled water from other source and mains water	1

Appendix B.2. Cover Crop Types

Table B.4 below shows the different cover crop types used together and their frequency.

Table B.4: Frequency and class types of cover crop types used by vineyards.

Cover crop types	**frequency**
Cover crop types	frequency
permanent cover crop volunteer sward	1822
permanent cover crop non native	936
permanent cover crop native	490
annual cover crop	479
groundwater and surface water dam	406
annual cover crop and permanent cover crop volunteer sward	309
bare soil	225
permanent cover crop non native and permanent cover crop volunteer sward	214
annual cover crop and permanent cover crop non native	169
bare soil and permanent cover crop volunteer sward	129

Continued on next page

Table B.4 – continued from previous page

Cover crop types	frequency
bare soil and permanent cover crop non native	115
annual cover crop and permanent cover crop non native and permanent cover crop volunteer sward	101
bare soil and annual cover crop	93
permanent cover crop native and permanent cover crop volunteer sward	80
bare soil and permanent cover crop native	78
annual cover crop and permanent cover crop native	78
permanent cover crop native and permanent cover crop non native	68
permanent cover crop native and permanent cover crop non native and permanent cover crop volunteer sward	44
annual cover crop and permanent cover crop native and permanent cover crop non native and permanent cover crop volunteer sward	44

Continued on next page

Table B.4 – continued from previous page

Cover crop types	**frequency**
bare soil and annual cover crop and permanent cover crop volunteer sward	33
bare soil and permanent cover crop non native and permanent cover crop volunteer sward	26
annual cover crop and permanent cover crop native and permanent cover crop volunteer sward	17
bare soil and annual cover crop and permanent cover crop native	15
annual cover crop and permanent cover crop native and permanent cover crop non native	15
bare soil and annual cover crop and permanent cover crop non native	13
bare soil and annual cover crop and permanent cover crop native and permanent cover crop non native and permanent cover crop volunteer sward	12
bare soil and annual cover crop and permanent cover crop non native and permanent cover crop volunteer sward	11

Continued on next page

Table B.4 – continued from previous page

Cover crop types	frequency
bare soil and annual cover crop and permanent cover crop native and permanent cover crop non native	8
bare soil and permanent cover crop native and permanent cover crop non native	7
bare soil and permanent cover crop native and permanent cover crop volunteer sward	6
bare soil and permanent cover crop native and permanent cover crop non native and permanent cover crop volunteer sward	4
bare soil and annual cover crop and permanent cover crop native and permanent cover crop volunteer sward and	2

Appendix B.3. Irrigation Types

Below in Table B.5 are the frequency and different irrigation types.

Table B.5: Frequency and class types of irrigation types used by vineyards.

Irrigation types	**frequency**
Irrigation type	frequency
dripper	4800
dripper and non irrigated	342
Not listed	319
dripper and overhead sprinkler	201
dripper and undervine sprinkler	91
non irrigated	65
undervine sprinkler	53
dripper and flood	53
overhead sprinkler	46
dripper and overhead sprinkler and undervine sprinkler	28
overhead sprinkler and undervine sprinkler	12
dripper and non irrigated and overhead sprinkler	11
flood and undervine sprinkler	10

Continued on next page

Table B.5 – continued from previous page

Irrigation types	frequency
dripper and flood and undervine sprinkler	7
dripper and flood and non irrigated and overhead sprinkler and undervine sprinkler	3
dripper and flood and overhead sprinkler	3
non irrigated and undervine sprinkler	2
dripper and flood and non irrigated	1
dripper and non irrigated and overhead sprinkler and undervine sprinkler	1
flood and	1

Appendix B.4. Irrigation Energy Type

Below, Table **??** shows the different types of energy used to power vineyards and their frequency.

Table B.6: Frequency and class types of irrigation energy types used by vineyards.

Irrigation Energy types	**frequency**
Irrigation energy type	frequency
electricity	2162
not listed	2053
pressure	586
electricity and pressure	396
diesel	254
diesel and electricity	227
electricity and solar	96
diesel and electricity and pressure	90
diesel and pressure	74
solar	50
electricity and pressure and solar	23
diesel and electricity and solar	14
diesel and electricity and pressure and solar	10
pressure and solar	9

Continued on next page

Table B.6 – continued from previous page

Irrigation Energy types	frequency
diesel and solar	4
diesel and pressure and solar and	1

Appendix B.5. Year

Below in Table B.7 is the list of years and the number of sample collected in each.

Table B.7: Frequency and class types of year

Year	**frequency**
Year	frequency
2021/2022	954
2020/2021	860
2019/2020	599
2012/2013	590
2013/2014	549
2015/2016	548
2014/2015	505
2017/2018	493
2016/2017	485
2018/2019	466

Appendix B.6. Region

Below in Table B.8 are the number of collected samples for each region.

Table B.8: Frequency and class types of regions.

Regions	**frequency**
giregion	frequency
McLaren Vale	1195
Barossa Valley	584
Murray Darling	521
Riverland	472
Adelaide Hills	454
Langhorne Creek	347
Margaret River	344
Coonawarra	284
Padthaway	202
Wrattonbully	195
Clare Valley	149
Yarra Valley	122
Eden Valley	92
Tasmania	89
Swan Hill	83
Grampians	73
Orange	72

Continued on next page

Table B.8 – continued from previous page

Regions	frequency
Hunter Valley	70
Bendigo	53
Great Southern	51
Rutherglen	41
Robe	36
Tumbarumba	35
Mornington Peninsula	32
King Valley	32
Southern Fleurieu	30
Heathcote	29
Adelaide Plains	25
Currency Creek	24
	23
Henty	22
Canberra District	21
Southern Flinders Ranges	20
Upper Goulburn	20
Mudgee	20
Mount Benson	20
Other	19
Riverina	18
Alpine Valleys	15

Continued on next page

Table B.8 – continued from previous page

Regions	**frequency**
Barossa Zone	14
Pemberton	12
Mount Gambier	11
Blackwood Valley	10
Kangaroo Island	10
Big Rivers Zone Other	9
Geographe	7
Cowra	6
Gundagai	5
Strathbogie Ranges	5
Glenrowan	4
Geelong	4
Swan District	4
Goulburn Valley	3
Beechworth	3
Southern Highlands	3
Macedon Ranges	2
Pyrenees	2
Sunbury	1

Appendix C. XGBoost

Following Chen and Guestrin (Chen and Guestrin, 2016), XGBoost predicted a value y_i from the input x_i. The method of prediction is achieved through a tree ensemble model, using K additive functions to predict the output. Each of f_k functions is a classification or regression tree, such that all functions are in the set of all decision trees, given by $\mathcal{F}$, is defined by $f(x) = \omega_{q(x)}(q : \mathbb{R}^m \to T, \omega \in \mathbb{R}^T)$. Where each function corresponds to an independent tree structure q of ω weights. Each tree has T leaves, which contain a continuous score, represented by ω_i for the i-th leaf. The final prediction is determined by the sum of the score of the corresponding leaves, given by:

$$\hat{y}_i = \phi(x_i) = \sum_{k=1}^{K} f_k(x_i), f_K \in \mathcal{F}, \tag{C.1}$$

The set of functions, $\mathcal{F}$, used by the tree is determined by minimising a regularised objective function, $\mathcal{L}$ given by:

$$\mathcal{L}(\phi) = \sum_i l(\hat{y}_i, y_i^{t-1} + f_t(x_i)) + \sum_k \Omega(f_K). \tag{C.2}$$

, where

$$\Omega(f) = \gamma T + \frac{1}{2}\lambda||\omega||^2 \tag{C.3}$$

As predictions are made using additive tree functions, XGboost can be used for classification or regression. The difference between a prediction, $\phi(x_i)$, and actual variable, $f_k(x_i)$, is a differentiable convex loss function l. These properties of l allow the function to be versatile in which objective we choose to optimise for, which is also important in being able to process both continuous and categorical variables. To optimise l, the difference is calculated for the i-th instance at the t-th iteration.

Appendix C.1. Loss functions

The functions included as parameters in equation C.2 mean that traditional opimisation methods for Euclidean space cannot be used. Chen and Guestrin (Chen and Guestrin, 2016) illustrate, using Taylor expansions, that for a fixed structure $q(x)$ the optimal weight ω_j^* for a leaf j can be derived. Importantly a loss function can be used to fit a model iteratively to data. For this analysis several loss functions were used, as variables took the form of continuous, binary and multi-call data. The loss function for making a split within the tree structure is given by:

$$\mathcal{L}_{split} = \frac{1}{2}\left[\frac{(\sum_{i\in I_L} g_i)^2}{\sum_{i\in I_L} h_i + \lambda} + \frac{(\sum_{i\in I_R} g_i)^2}{\sum_{i\in I_R} h_i + \lambda} - \frac{(\sum_{i\in I} g_i)^2}{\sum_{i\in I} h_i + \lambda}\right] - \gamma. \tag{C.4}$$

The tree structure being defined using left I_L and right I_R instance sets of nodes, with $I = I_L \cup I_R$. Instead of enumerating all possible tree structures, a greedy algorithm iteratively adds branches to the tree minimising $\mathcal{L}_{split}$ in (C.4). The frequency of a variable's occurrence within a tree is directly attributed to the minimisation of the loss function through the minimisation of $\mathcal{L}_{split}$.

The loss functions used for this analysis were the root-mean-square function for continuous variables, the logistic loss function for binary class variables, and the soft max function for Multiclass variables. All objective functions are defined within the SKlearn library (Buitinck et al., 2013), which was utilised via an API to the XGBoost library (Chen and Guestrin, 2016).

Appendix C.2. Year

The classification tree and XGBoost performed similarly for classifying year with 35.20% (6.28% standard deviation) and 51.81% (42.20% validation accuracy) respectively. Electricity and the type of irrigation were highly influential within the classification tree. Similarly, electricity was the most frequently occurring node in the XGBoost ensemble. Other variables such as slashing passes, and fungicide and herbicide spraying were more prevalent than in the classification tree. Weed and disease outbreaks are likely an influential factor when classifying different years, making the decisions to spray and slash unique factors that differ year to year. Climatic differences between years are likely tied to the influence of yield and water use.

Over half of the interrelated importance of the predictor variables is dominated by area harvested, yield and slashing passes. Although all the predictor variables are highly connected, their relative importance is not as prominent as the three major variables. It is of particular note of the relative importance of slashing passes to area, fuel and yield; as these are not directly related activities. The connection between the number of slashing and spraying passes is that those who do a set number of spraying or slashing passes tended to do that many passes for all slashing and spraying activities.

Appendix C.3. Profit

Predictions of profit perfomed poorly compared to operating cost and revenue with an average R^2 of 0.2535 and standard deviation of 0.3126. With the large standard deviation being indicative of how unstable the models created were.

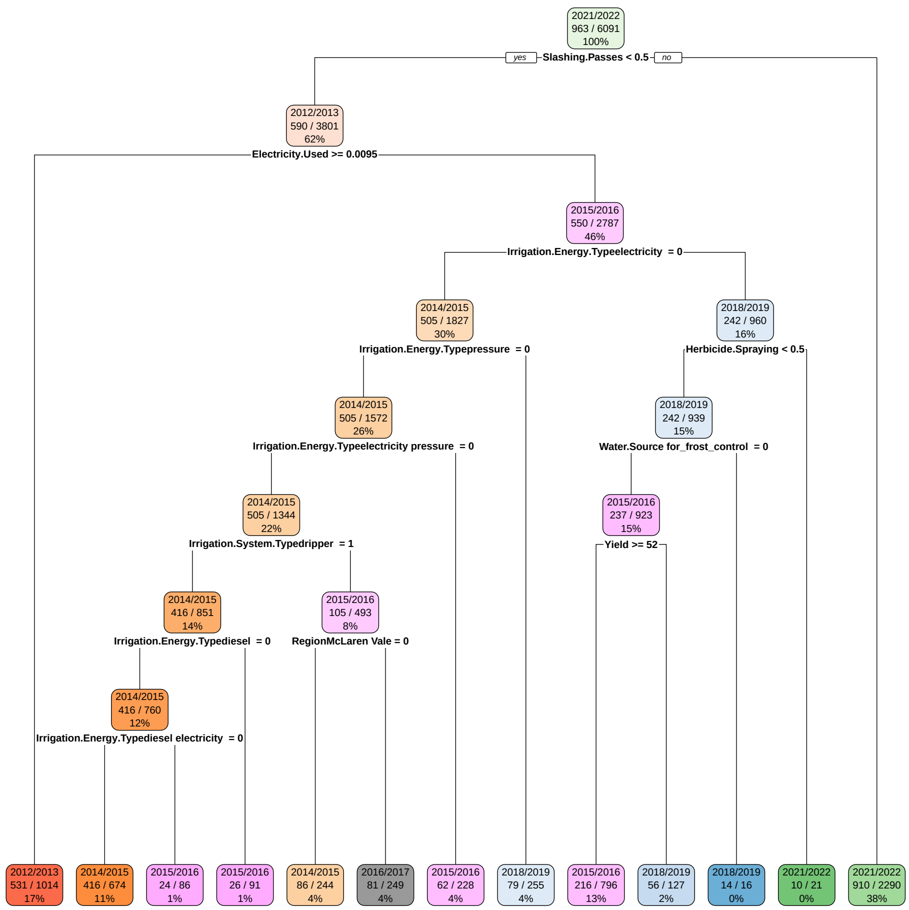

Figure C.4: Decision tree predicting Year. Each node indicates the class predicted, and the proportion of elements agreeing with nodes partitioning, with the left direction indicating a yes to the nodes rule.

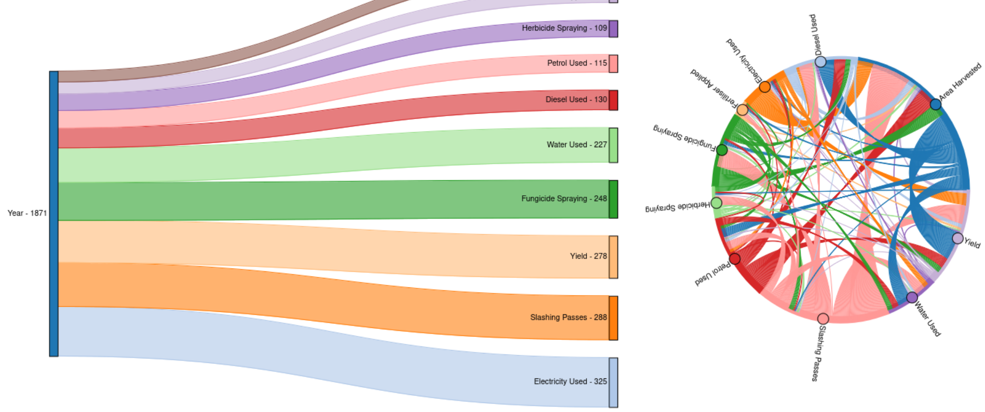

Figure C.5: The left-hand side depicts the 10 most important variables in predicting Year using XGBoost as a measure of node occurrence, using a Sankey diagram. The right-hand side depicts the interrelated importance of the ten predictor variables using a chord diagram.

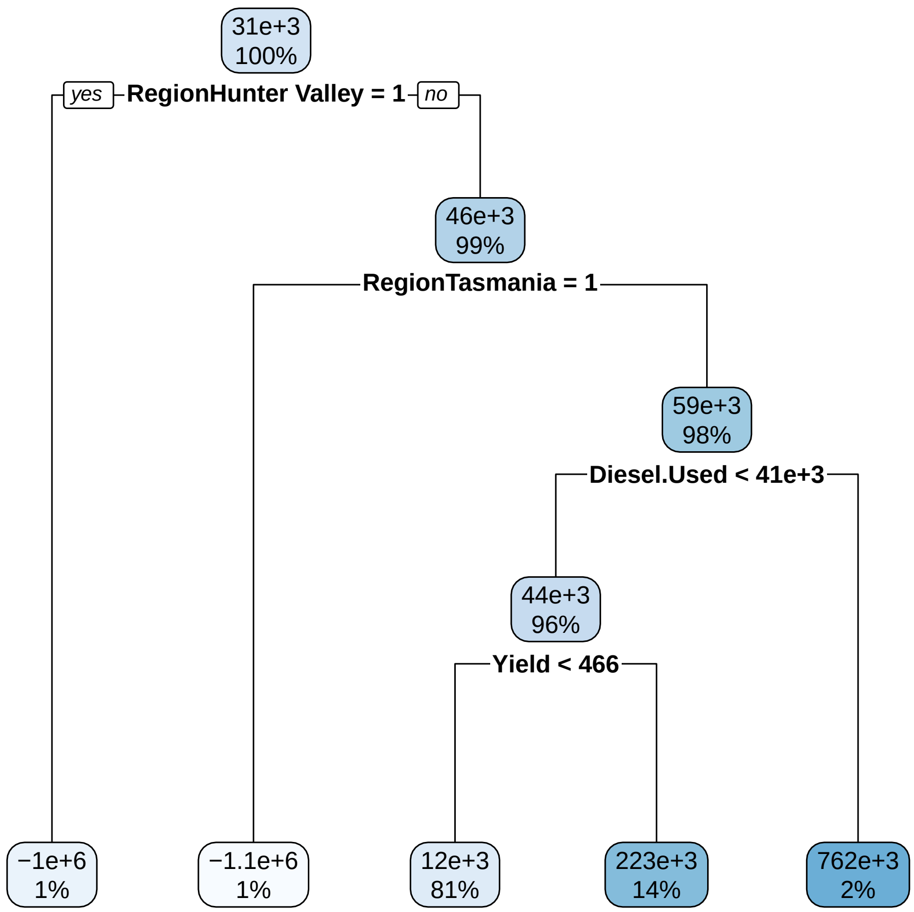

Figure C.6: Decision tree predicting revenue. Each node indicates the class predicted, and the proportion of elements agreeing with nodes partitioning, with the left direction indicating a yes to the nodes rule.

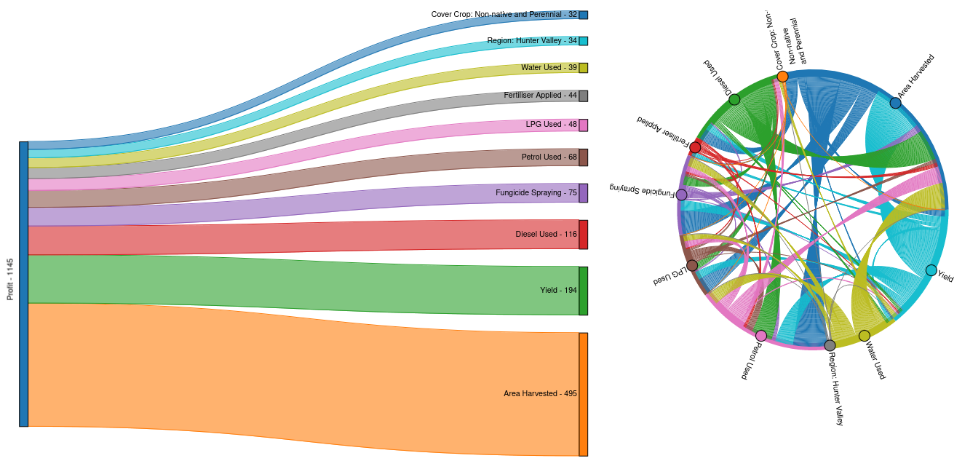

Figure C.7: The left-hand side depicts the 10 most important variables in predicting revenue using XGBoost as a measure of node occurrence, using a Sankey diagram. The right-hand side depicts the interrelated importance of the ten predictor variables using a chord diagram.