



## *Companies on the Path to Zero Waste:*

**FETZER**  
VINEYARDS

**Fetzer**  
Hopland, CA

Fetzer Vineyards was recognized in 1999 for the winery's sustainable business practices especially in the area of the environment. Business Ethics Magazine awarded Fetzer their "Award for Environmental Excellence". The US Environmental Protection Agency presented Fetzer with its "Climate Wise Partnership Award" for reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Established in 1968, the winery began converting their vineyards to certified organically farmed in the mid 1980's. Fetzer now farms 600 acres of grapes certified by the California Certified Organic Farmers (CCOF). When they purchase new vineyard land or established vineyards they are all converted to organic farming. Part of organic farming techniques employ planting cover crops between rows to attract beneficial predator insects. These insects eat the ones harmful to grapes. Canopy management allows sunlight through the leaf and cane structure of the vine, which reduces mold and rot, and reduces the need for fungicides.

Their sustainable business practices include a strong waste management program. As of January 2001, they have reduced their waste to landfill by 94% since 1990 while growing their production by almost 50%. Fetzer Vineyards employees recycle all of the usual suspects and those items that are unique to wineries like corks and diatomaceous earth. They bail 150 tons of excess cardboard, 20 tons of shrink wrap plastic, and 210 tons of glass for resale. Fetzer estimates they have saved well over \$150,000 in dump fees by reducing their waste. Additionally, Fetzer has an extensive composting program that incorporates all of the skins and seeds from the crushed grapes, approximately 4000 tons that is windrowed and covered for the winter rains. The compost is then used as a natural fertilizer in the vineyards and landscaping.

Fetzer has also reduced waste in their products. They became the first winery in the USA to create a new and fully recyclable aluminum capsule. These poly laminate aluminum capsules are found on many of Fetzer Premium Varietals wines. New flange top bottles for some of the brands has eliminated the need for capsules altogether. They reduce the packaging for their corks by buying directly from Portugal and having them shipped in large containers.

Fetzer has reduced the waste of energy at their production facilities. A simple insulated concrete wall was devised to separate cold stabilizing white wines from red wines, resulting in a power bill reduction of \$5000 per month. A recently completed upgrade of refrigerator compressor motor controls is predicted to save 225,000 kWh of electricity a year. Also, a new 75 kW natural gas fired cogeneration unit installed at the red barrel room will produce both water for the barrel washing operation and electricity for the heating and cooling of the building. Fetzer's Administration building which features rammed earth walls, recycled wood and doors, uses motorized and computerized windows for night air cooling. On the roof of this building is a 40 kW photovoltaic display which produced over 56,000 kWh of electricity last year, supplying over 75% of the building's energy need. On top of all this Fetzer signed a multi year contract in 1999 for 100% renewable power, one of the few corporations in California to do so.

To reduce the waste of water and the energy to treat it, Fetzer created a natural filtration system for handling process wastewater in 1998. Fetzer's wastewater ponds were converted into a natural system employing gravel and sand filters, and a planted reedbed. Low energy aeration takes place with sprinklers instead of energy burning motors. The treated water is used on the organically farmed vineyards and landscaping.

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<http://www.fetzer.com/background/envcommit.html>