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Growers expect to finish Rhineland-Palatinate’s unusually early Riesling harvest by midweek.

Dry weather kept disease low, but sharp differences in water supply left ripeness uneven from one vineyard to another.

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The Riesling grape harvest in Rhineland-Palatinate is entering its final stage, with growers expecting to finish picking by midweek after an unusually early season marked by dry weather and uneven ripening across vineyards.

A spokeswoman for the Farmers and Winegrowers Association of Rhineland-Palatinate South said the grapes are in very healthy condition this year because of the dry conditions. That has raised expectations for a strong Riesling vintage in Germany’s leading wine state. Harvest workers were still active in recent days at sites including the Calmont in Bremm, a steep vineyard slope on the Moselle that is among the region’s best known and most demanding locations for manual picking.

Riesling is widely seen as the flagship variety of German winegrowing, and its performance each year is closely watched by producers and wine buyers. The grape is used to make fresh, fruit-driven white wines and is valued for showing the character of where it was grown. It also has a broad commercial role, appearing in styles that range from high-quality still wines to sweet wines and spritzers.

The German Wine Institute said this year’s wine harvest began earlier than ever before. Even so, the season has not progressed evenly. According to the institute, vineyards have shown major differences in ripeness because water supply has varied sharply from one site to another. Where drought has been especially severe, the ripening process has been slowed. That means some vineyards have needed more time to reach the point where grapes are ready to be picked.

The contrast reflects a growing challenge for growers in Germany as hot, dry periods become more important in shaping the crop. While the lack of rain helped keep disease pressure low and left many Riesling grapes healthy, it also created stress in vineyards with weaker water reserves. In practice, that has meant that producers could not harvest all sites on the same schedule, even within the same region.

The weather pattern appears to have favored not only white grapes but also several red and warmer-climate varieties. The German Wine Institute said the dry, hot summer and strong sunshine were especially beneficial for red grapes such as Spätburgunder, known internationally as Pinot Noir. It also said southern varieties including Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon and Syrah, which are appearing more often in Germany, benefited

from the season.

For the wine trade, the result of the Riesling harvest matters beyond the vineyard. Because Riesling remains the best-known German grape and a central product for many wineries, the quality and eventual volumes of this year’s crop could influence supply decisions, pricing and production planning in the domestic market as well as export sales. That is particularly relevant for producers in Rhineland-Palatinate, which plays a central role in Germany’s wine output and in the country’s image abroad as a Riesling producer.

The current outlook from growers is positive on quality, even if the season has required patience in some vineyards. The combination of healthy fruit and careful timing at harvest is expected to be important for producers trying to capture freshness and site character in the finished wines. With picking now close to completion, wineries will soon turn from harvest logistics to cellar work, where the promise of the grapes will begin to be tested in the tanks and barrels.