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# New Zealand increased wine exports 8% to 306.2 million liters

The smaller 2026 harvest brought supply closer to demand, potentially sharpening pricing talks in key premium markets.

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New Zealand increased its wine export volume by 8% in the 12 months through June, even as its 2026 harvest fell about 15%, a combination that suggests a tighter balance between supply and demand in one of the world’s important wine-exporting countries.

According to the annual report from New Zealand Winegrowers, export volume rose to 306.2 million liters from 288.8 million liters a year earlier. Export value reached NZ$2.108 billion, up slightly from NZ$2.10 billion in the previous year.

The figures show that New Zealand continued to expand shipments abroad despite what industry leaders described as a difficult environment for wine producers at home and overseas. New Zealand Winegrowers said its wines continued to perform better than the broader wine category in key markets, which the group said supports confidence in the industry’s long-term outlook.

The export gains came as the country’s 2026 vintage produced a smaller crop of about 440,000 tonnes, down 15% from the previous year. New Zealand Winegrowers said the lower harvest brought production into closer alignment with current market demand and supports the industry’s goal of sustainable long-term growth.

For the beverage industry, the figures matter beyond New Zealand’s domestic wine business. The country is a key supplier in many premium wine markets, and a year of higher exports alongside a smaller harvest could affect supply expectations, pricing talks and contract negotiations for importers, distributors and retailers that depend on New Zealand labels.

The report also offered a scale comparison with Australia, New Zealand’s larger regional competitor. Australia exported 598 million liters of wine in the same 12-month period, with a value of AUD$2.30 billion, or about NZ$2.86 billion. Australia’s export volume was nearly double New Zealand’s, but New Zealand’s results again pointed to the strength of its higher-value positioning in overseas markets.

Fabian Yukich, chair of New Zealand Winegrowers, said the latest report showed an industry that was still adapting rather than standing still. He said the global wine industry had gone through a challenging year, but that New Zealand producers had remained resilient. He also said growers and wineries were making adjustments and that the industry was moving toward a more balanced footing.

The smaller harvest is likely to be watched closely by buyers in export markets. A reduction in crop size does not automatically mean shortages, especially if inventories remain available, but it can change the tone of commercial discussions if overseas demand holds up. That is especially relevant in a market where New Zealand wines, including Sauvignon Blanc and Pinot Noir, are often positioned in higher-priced segments.

Anishka Jelicich, who took over as chief executive in July, said the organization’s new strategy is focused on supporting growers and wineries with information, advocacy and practical help so they can make well-informed decisions. She said the aim is to strengthen the industry over the long term and help it remain competitive.

The report arrives at a time when wine producers in several countries are dealing with weaker consumer demand, changing drinking habits, cost pressures and uneven economic conditions across major markets. Against that backdrop, New Zealand’s ability to lift export volume while keeping export value above NZ$2.1 billion stands out as a sign of relative stability, even if the increase in value was modest.

The latest numbers also suggest that New Zealand producers are trying to avoid the deeper imbalances that have affected parts of the global wine trade, where oversupply has pressured prices and forced companies to cut back. By bringing production closer to current demand, the 2026 harvest result may help the sector protect margins and reduce the risk of excess stock, although much will depend on demand trends in the coming year.

For exporters and beverage buyers, the main message is that New Zealand remains an active and resilient player in international wine trade, but with a tighter crop that may reshape supply conditions as the market absorbs the 2026 vintage.