vinetur

Alsace forecasts a 4.4% drop in its 2026 wine harvest.

The estimate would mark a third annual decline, with Riesling losses reaching 40% in some vineyards.

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Alsace is heading for a third straight smaller wine harvest, even if the drop this year looks less severe than officials feared earlier in September. The Chamber of Agriculture of Alsace said on Sept. 29 that the region’s 2026 wine production is estimated at 804,000 hectoliters, down from 840,681 hectoliters in 2025. That is a decline of 36,681 hectoliters, or about 3.67 million liters, equal to 4.4%.

The estimate matters beyond the headline total because the losses are not evenly spread across Alsace’s vineyards. The sharpest pressure is on Riesling, one of the region’s best-known grapes, while other varieties have held up better and softened the overall decline. In some areas, Riesling yields fell by as much as 40%, according to the regional chamber. It said some plots were not harvested at all. That 40% figure does not describe the whole of Alsace, but it points to a concentrated setback in parts of the vineyard.

The regional estimate suggests the 2026 crop has resisted better than expected at the start of the month. On Sept. 7, the French Agriculture Ministry had projected a 6% decline for Alsace. The new estimate implies a drop that is 1.6 percentage points less severe than that earlier forecast. Even so, the latest figure would still mark the third annual decrease in a row for the region.

The better-than-feared overall result appears to come largely from varieties that performed more solidly than Riesling. Pinot Blanc and Auxerrois developed better than expected, according to the Chamber of Agriculture. Those grapes are important not only for still wines but also for Crémant d’Alsace, the region’s sparkling wine category. Their relative resilience helped offset part of the weaker Riesling crop and prevented a steeper fall in total production.

That split between varieties could shape supply in the months ahead. A smaller Riesling harvest may tighten availability for one of Alsace’s signature wines, especially if the shortfalls seen in the hardest-hit areas are reflected in commercial volumes later on. At the same time, the stronger showing from Pinot Blanc and Auxerrois may give producers more room in other segments of their portfolio, including wines linked to Crémant production.

The chamber’s estimate is still provisional. It was prepared at the end of August and is not a final harvest tally. The last vineyard parcels were still expected to be picked around Oct. 1, meaning the final result could change once all fruit is in and reported. That timing is important because regional harvest numbers often move between early estimates and the final balance sheet, especially when picking extends into late September and early October.

Even with that caution, the numbers provide one of the clearest regional snapshots so far of the 2026 vintage in Alsace. The figures point to a harvest that remains below last year’s level but avoids the deeper cut that had been feared earlier in the month. For growers and buyers, the main issue is less the regionwide total than the uneven pattern behind it. A 4.4% fall across Alsace does not fully capture what a much steeper decline in Riesling can mean for estates that depend heavily on that grape.

Alsace is one of France’s most distinct wine regions, and changes in volume there are watched closely because production is tied to a relatively narrow range of varieties and styles. When one grape falls sharply while others perform better, the commercial effect can differ from the overall harvest figure. Producers with more exposure to Riesling may face a tighter vintage than neighbors whose vineyards are more heavily planted with Pinot Blanc or Auxerrois.

For now, the 804,000-hectoliter estimate stands as the reference point for the 2026 crop. It shows a smaller harvest than in 2025, confirms a third consecutive annual decline, and highlights a strong varietal gap inside the region. The broad Alsace harvest appears to have held up better than expected, but the pressure on Riesling remains significant in the areas where losses were deepest.