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France raises its 2026 wine harvest forecast to 34.9 million hectoliters

The Agriculture Ministry still expects the country’s smallest crop of the century after drought and heat cut yields.

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France has raised its forecast for the 2026 wine harvest, but the country still expects the smallest crop of this century after a season marked by drought, extreme heat and sharp differences between regions.

The French Agriculture Ministry said Wednesday that wine production is now expected to reach 34.9 million hectoliters, up from 33.9 million hectoliters in its September estimate. The revision adds 1 million hectoliters, or 2.9%, to last month's outlook, mainly because conditions turned out better than expected in Languedoc-Roussillon, the country's biggest wine-producing region.

Even with that upgrade, the ministry's forecast remains 2% below 2025 and 14% below the average for 2021 through 2025. Based on those percentages, this year's crop is roughly 0.7 million hectoliters smaller than last year's and about 5.7 million hectoliters below the recent five-year average, though those volume gaps are approximate because the percentages are rounded.

The estimate is provisional rather than a final certified production figure, but it points to a weak national harvest in one of the world's main wine-producing countries. France is usually the world's second-largest wine producer, and the size of its crop is closely watched by growers, traders and bottlers across Europe and beyond.

The ministry said the shortfall reflects both long-term and seasonal pressures. Vineyard area has been shrinking, and yields were reduced this year by dry conditions and intense summer heat. French agriculture more broadly has been hit by repeated heat waves and a lack of rain, prompting the government last month to announce more than €1 billion in emergency aid for farmers.

The national picture also hides wide regional gaps. Some vineyards posted better yields than last year, while others suffered major losses from frost, hail, drought and heat. The strongest improvement came in Languedoc-Roussillon, where late summer rain helped vines recover enough for output to rise above normal levels. The ministry now expects the region to produce 10.585 million hectoliters, up 20% from 2025 and 2% above its five-year average.

That gain matters because Languedoc-Roussillon is by far the largest contributor to French wine output. Its improvement was the main reason the national forecast was revised upward from September. Without that rebound, the country's total harvest would have looked even weaker.

The worst adjustment remains in Champagne, where the ministry said harvesting ended in early September, the earliest finish on record for the region. Production there is expected to fall to 1.344 million hectoliters, down 48% from 2025 and 46% below the five-year average. In practical terms, that means Champagne is producing about half as much wine as it did last year and about half of what it usually produces. The ministry linked the drop to a combination of frost, hail, drought and heat.

Bordeaux, another closely watched region, is moving in a different direction. Output there is forecast at 3.496 million hectoliters, up 10% from last year’s poor harvest. Even so, that would still leave the region 11% below its five-year average. The ministry said part of the pressure in Bordeaux comes from the removal of some vineyard area as producers respond to weaker wine consumption.

Other regions are also expected to post lower production. Burgundy-Beaujolais is forecast at 1.481 million hectoliters, down 22% from 2025 and 30% below its five-year average. The Loire Valley is expected to produce 1.973 million hectoliters, down 7% from last year and 14% below average. Charentes, an important area for Cognac base wine, is forecast at 7.022 million hectoliters, down 11% from 2025 and 28% below average.

In eastern France, Alsace is expected to produce 810,000 hectoliters, 6% below last year and 11% below average. Jura is forecast at just 67,000 hectoliters, down 28% from 2025 and 13% below its five-year norm. Savoie was one of the few smaller regions to avoid a setback, with output expected at 107,000 hectoliters, up 1% from last year and 9% above average.

The southwest showed mixed results. The South-West region is expected to produce 2.622 million hectoliters, up 12% from 2025 but still 1% below average. Corsica is forecast at 360,000 hectoliters, unchanged from last year and 5% above average. In the South-East, output is expected at 4.502 million hectoliters, down 3% from 2025 and 8% below average.

Taken together, the figures show that France’s improved monthly outlook does not change the broader pattern of a reduced harvest shaped by climate stress and smaller vineyard area. The ministry’s report makes clear that the late-season rain that helped

Languedoc-Roussillon was not enough to offset steep declines in Champagne and weaker production across several other regions.

For growers and wine merchants, the regional imbalance may matter as much as the national total. A modest improvement in one large area can lift the countrywide forecast, but it does not ease supply pressure in regions where losses have been severe or where specific categories of wine depend on local harvests. Champagne is the clearest example this year, with production dropping far more sharply than the national average after a season of repeated weather shocks.

The ministry is expected to refine its estimates as more harvest data are collected and verified during the fall.