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France Expects a Historically Small 2026 Wine Harvest of 35 Million Hectoliters

Drought, heat and vineyard removals are set to push output 14% below the 2021-2025 average, the Agriculture Ministry said.

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France is heading for a historically small 2026 grape harvest, with the national wine output expected to reach about 35 million hectoliters, according to an official estimate released Wednesday by the Agriculture Ministry.

The ministry said that level would be 2% lower than in 2025 and 14% below the average for 2021 through 2025. The forecast points to a weak national harvest even though conditions have varied sharply from one wine region to another.

The biggest pressure has come from the weather. French authorities said drought and intense heat have cut yields in several important producing areas, including Bordeaux, Burgundy and the Rhône Valley. In those regions, growers have faced difficult growing conditions during a year marked by strong climatic stress.

Other wine areas have done better. The ministry said some regions have benefited from more rainfall and milder temperatures, allowing for a more favorable harvest than in the hardest-hit vineyards. That gap has left France with a crop that is not uniformly poor, but uneven, with strong regional differences in both volume and growing conditions.

The official forecast also reflects structural changes in the sector. In addition to the impact of heat and drought, vineyard removals have reduced production potential. That means the smaller harvest is not only the result of one season’s weather, but also of a continuing adjustment in the size of the country’s vineyard area.

Growers are preparing for the harvest by adjusting field practices and vineyard management to local conditions, the ministry said. Those decisions can include how vines are maintained through dry periods and how producers organize picking in areas where ripening has been affected by high temperatures. The challenge this year is not the same everywhere, which makes the harvest more complex for producers operating across different appellations and regions.

The estimate underlines the pressure facing French wine producers as climate volatility becomes a more regular part of the growing season. A low-output year can affect not just farm income, but also the balance between supply, inventories and pricing across the market. For wineries, merchants and exporters, a smaller French crop may complicate purchasing and commercial planning in the months ahead, especially for wines tied to regions where yields have fallen the most.

France remains one of the key sources of wine for domestic and international buyers, so changes in its harvest are closely watched across the drinks business. A crop of about 35 million hectoliters does not automatically mean shortages across the board, because conditions differ by region and because existing stocks can soften the effect in some categories. Still, the lower volume increases the importance of regional availability, harvest quality and the decisions producers make on how much wine they bring to market.

The ministry’s assessment adds to a broader pattern seen in recent years, as repeated weather extremes continue to test the French wine industry. This year’s harvest, while more favorable in some places than others, again shows how strongly national production can be shaped by heat, lack of rain and changes in vineyard area.