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Piedmont Sets Aside €1.5 Million to Redirect Unsold DOC and DOCG Wines

The experimental program pays about €40 per hectoliter for protected wine sent to vinegar or other industrial uses.

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Italy’s Piedmont region has set aside €1.5 million to help wine producers deal with unsold stocks of protected wines, opening an experimental program aimed at moving excess DOC and DOCG production into uses other than sale as wine.

The measure, approved by the regional government on Oct. 7, targets a growing stockpile in cellars across one of Italy’s main wine-producing areas. According to the regional call for applications, the program is meant to support supply-chain agreements that give producers a commercial outlet for wine that has not found buyers, while covering part of the cost of keeping those volumes in storage.

The move comes as the region describes its wine sector as being in a “deep crisis,” citing higher production costs, tariffs, the effects of climate change and shifting consumption patterns in international markets. Those pressures, the regional notice says, have slowed sales, especially in the hospitality sector and export markets, and increased unsold inventories held by wineries.

Under the program, support is limited to unbottled DOC and DOCG wines, or wines certified for those designations or eligible to receive them, from the 2025 harvest or earlier. The wines must still be held at company facilities. In Italy, DOC and DOCG are protected quality designations tied to production rules and geographic origin, and the restriction means the measure is focused on higher-value appellation wines rather than bulk wine more broadly.

Eligible applicants include wine producers and cooperative wineries that meet the requirements set out by the region. Each beneficiary can apply for support on volumes ranging from 300 hectoliters, or 30,000 liters, to 4,000 hectoliters, or 400,000 liters.

The financial aid is calculated at €39.5373 per hectoliter, roughly €40 per hectoliter, based on an average storage period of 487 days running from July 31, 2025, to Nov. 30, 2026. The payment is intended to offset part of the cost of storing wine that could not be sold through normal commercial channels.

If total eligible applications exceed the money available, the supported volume will be reduced on a proportional basis, according to the regional rules. Applications are open from Oct. 7 through Nov. 30 and must be filed through the Piedmont regional government’s online system.

One of the most significant parts of the program is the condition attached to the funding. To receive support, producers and cooperatives must sign supply-chain agreements with processing companies and direct the supported wine to uses other than sale as wine. The regional documents specifically exclude products obtained through distillation. Among the possible destinations mentioned by the region is conversion into vinegar, along with other non-wine uses.

That condition sets this measure apart from more traditional interventions aimed at reducing wine surpluses. Instead of supporting distillation or destruction, Piedmont is trying to create alternative industrial outlets for protected wines that remain in storage. For the beverage industry, the program could become an early test of whether excess appellation wine can be redirected in a way that eases pressure on winery inventories and prices without sending it into distillation, an approach that may matter if oversupply continues in other producing areas.

Paolo Bongioanni, Piedmont’s regional agriculture councilor, said the measure is intended to answer a need raised by producers for solutions to the quantities of wine still sitting in cellars and to encourage new agreements between wine companies and other parts of the food-processing chain.

The timing is important for producers because the measure arrives as the sector is also dealing with a new harvest. The regional notice warns that the continued buildup of stocks could put further pressure on wine prices in 2027 and on grapes from the 2026 harvest. In that sense, the program is not only a storage-cost subsidy but also an attempt to prevent existing inventories from weighing further on the next commercial cycle for Piedmont wine.