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Occitanie wine cooperatives reject price cuts after harvest rebounds to nearly 13 million hectoliters

The group says fuller tanks reflect normalization, not oversupply, in a region that produces more than one-third of France’s wine

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Wine cooperatives in Occitanie are pushing back against any attempt to cut grape and bulk wine prices after the region’s 2026 harvest rebounded to an estimated nearly 13 million hectoliters, arguing that a return to more normal volumes does not amount to oversupply.

In a statement published Tuesday, November 10, the Vignerons Coopérateurs d’Occitanie said the harvest should reach about 11 million hectoliters in Languedoc-Roussillon and 2 million hectoliters in the former Midi-Pyrénées area. The group said those volumes follow three years of exceptionally weak crops and should be seen as a normalization rather than a reason for buyers to press prices lower.

The cooperatives’ estimate for Languedoc-Roussillon closely matches figures released by Agreste, the statistical office of France’s Agriculture Ministry, on November 6. Agreste put the region’s production at 11.068 million hectoliters as of November 1, up 25% from a year earlier. National wine output was estimated at 36.659 million hectoliters, up 3% year over year but still 10% below the 2021-2025 average.

Those figures underline the weight of southern France in the 2026 crop. Based on the Agreste data and the cooperatives’ estimate for the former Midi-Pyrénées, Occitanie accounts for slightly more than one-third of France’s estimated wine production. That makes the region’s pricing stance important beyond local growers, especially because a large share of its wines is sold in bulk or under protected geographical indication labels. Any resistance to lower prices in such a large supplying region could shape purchasing conditions for merchants, bottlers and other beverage businesses, with possible effects on margins across the supply chain.

Fabien Castelbou, president of the Vignerons Coopérateurs d’Occitanie, said in the statement that growers are finally returning to production levels closer to normal after several very small harvests. He said that should not become “a pretext” for lower prices and added that the wine sector has little room left to absorb further pressure.

The cooperatives said producers are still facing high costs for energy, packaging, agricultural inputs, labor, financing and compliance with environmental and regulatory requirements. They also said the region has already reduced part of its productive capacity through vine removal and vineyard restructuring, a point intended to counter

any suggestion that fuller tanks this year reflect structural overproduction.

The regional rebound is also part of a wider split in the French crop. Agreste's November 1 estimate showed Languedoc-Roussillon posting the strongest increase among the country's main wine regions, while Champagne fell 38% from a year earlier. Other basins also rose, including the Southwest at 15%, Bordeaux at 10% and the Southeast at 7%. The southern increase helped offset weaker production in the north.

At the national level, the mix of wines also matters for the market. Agreste estimated production of IGP wines in France at 12.01 million hectoliters, up 18% from a year earlier, while appellation wines fell 4% to 15.042 million hectoliters. That pattern is significant for Occitanie, where IGP and varietal wines play a large role and often move through bulk channels before reaching store shelves.

The cooperatives described the 2026 growing season as early, dry and stretched over a long harvest. They said rainfall during the winter of 2025-2026 was close to normal, helping soils and vines recover part of their reserves after earlier stress. Spring and summer then returned to drought and high temperatures. According to the group, grapes came in with strong sanitary quality and balanced ripeness, leading it to describe the vintage as one of high quality, though broader market assessments will depend on later tastings and sales.

The dispute is focused on the prices paid to producers as the new commercial campaign begins, not on immediate retail prices for consumers. Nothing in the current figures shows that bottle prices in stores will necessarily fall. Retail pricing will depend on contracts, inventories and harvest conditions in other regions as well as on negotiations between producers, cooperatives, merchants and retailers.

The pressure on the sector remains visible despite the larger crop. Vinabox reported that in September the Roussillon area had four fewer cooperative wineries than a year earlier, underscoring the financial strain still facing parts of the industry even as volumes recover.