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World wine trade group adopted Stellenbosch Principles for sustainable winegrowing

U.S. officials said the voluntary guidance would encourage sustainable practices without creating new obstacles for cross-border wine sales

Friday, November 20, 2026



The Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau said Friday, November 20, that agency officials took part in international wine trade talks in Stellenbosch, South Africa, where regulators and industry representatives discussed a range of issues affecting the global wine business, including low- and no-alcohol products, digital labeling, sustainability and packaging rules.

TTB said representatives from its International Affairs Division and Office of Chief Counsel attended the World Wine Trade Group meeting from November 1-4 as part of the U.S. delegation. The bureau said the meeting brought together government and industry representatives from major wine-producing countries to examine emerging regulatory issues and ways to make cross-border wine trade easier while maintaining consumer protections.

According to TTB, U.S. officials provided updates on recent American Viticultural Area developments, including the establishment of the Columbia Hills AVA in Washington state. The agency said it also took part in work on guidance for calculating energy and calorie content and on regulatory principles for digital labeling, two areas that have become more important as producers and regulators respond to changing consumer demand and new technology.

A central result of the meeting was the adoption of the Stellenbosch Principles, which TTB described as voluntary guidance for governments to support sustainable winegrowing practices without creating new barriers to trade. The bureau did not announce any binding policy changes tied to the principles, but it presented the outcome as part of a broader effort to align regulatory approaches among major wine-exporting countries.

The World Wine Trade Group was founded in 1998 and serves as a forum for cooperation between governments and industry. Its members are Argentina, Australia, Canada, Chile, Georgia, New Zealand, South Africa, the United States and Uruguay. TTB said the group’s work focuses on information sharing, discussion of regulatory issues and joint efforts to reduce trade barriers while allowing regulators to protect consumers.

The newsletter also announced a separate federal notice seeking public comment on two existing information collections overseen by TTB. The agency said the request is part of the process required by the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 and is intended to reduce paperwork and respondent burden before the collections are sent to the Office of Management and Budget for reapproval.

The two collections are OMB No. 1513-0005, covering Brewer’s Notices, TTB Form 5130.10, and related letterhead applications and notices filed by brewers, and OMB No. 1513-0051, covering applications for an alcohol fuel producer permit under 26 U.S.C. 5181, TTB Form 5110.74. TTB said comments submitted by the public will be included or summarized in its request to OMB and will become part of the public record.

The agency said written comments must be received by January 12, 2027. Electronic comments may be filed through Regulations.gov under Docket No. TTB-2026-0001, using the notice titled Proposed Information Collections; Comment Request (No. 100). TTB said people who want to comment by mail should follow the instructions in the published notice.

TTB used the newsletter to remind readers that its offices will be closed Thursday, November 26, for Thanksgiving. It also said its next newsletter is scheduled for Friday, December 4.

The agency included a notice from the Department of the Interior that may be of interest to businesses in TTB-regulated industries. That notice seeks nominations for the Hunting and Shooting Sports Conservation and Access Council, a federal advisory body that provides recommendations to the secretaries of the Interior and Agriculture on wildlife and habitat conservation, public-private partnerships, hunting and shooting sports policy, and public access to those activities. The nomination deadline is November 30.

In the same newsletter, TTB highlighted several country pages on its website dealing with international import and export requirements, including Brazil, Canada, India, Japan, Korea and Mexico. It also listed upcoming outreach events where the agency expects to participate, including the Unified Wine and Grape Symposium on January 26-28, WSWA Access Live on February 1-4, and the Oregon Wine Symposium on February

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TTB, which regulates alcohol and tobacco tax and trade matters at the federal level, regularly uses its newsletter to update producers, importers, wholesalers and other businesses on trade discussions, compliance issues and rulemaking activity that can affect market access and regulatory obligations in the United States and abroad.