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Swiss brewers produced 1.86 million hectoliters through October, down 1.4%

A record hot summer drove seasonal brewing to a record high, but inflation, planned price increases and energy pressures slowed the market afterward

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Swiss brewers produced 1.86 million hectoliters of beer in the 2025/26 beer year through October, down 1.4% from the same period a year earlier, even though an unusually hot summer lifted demand and drove brewing volumes to a seasonal record, the Swiss Brewers Association said on Wednesday, November 25.

The industry group said 895,000 hectoliters were brewed during the main season from September to October. It described the summer of 2025 as a record-setting period, with very high temperatures and many sunny days that boosted beer consumption and led to the highest production level ever recorded for that stretch of the year.

Despite that strong summer, the association said the beer year so far has been mixed. It pointed to continuing inflation, the broader economic situation and planned price increases as sources of uncertainty for brewers and consumers. It also said growth slowed after the summer months, with higher prices and energy-related pressures weighing on the market.

One of the clearest bright spots was nonalcoholic beer. The association said output in that segment rose 15.5% from September to October to 180,000 hectoliters. It said nonalcoholic beer accounted for 9.7% of total beer sales in that period, underlining how much more important the category has become for Swiss brewers.

The figures suggest that brewers are operating in two markets at once. Traditional beer remains the core business, but the fastest growth is coming from alcohol-free products, which are attracting more space in production planning and product development. That matters for the wider beverage industry as companies decide where to put new investment, how to adjust product portfolios and how to respond to consumers who are both price-sensitive and increasingly interested in alternatives to standard alcoholic drinks.

The association said domestic beer production has remained stable against imported beer. Imports accounted for 25.5% of the market so far in the 2025/26 beer year, slightly above the level of the previous year. That means Swiss brewers are holding their position overall, even as foreign beer maintains a significant share of consumption.

At the same time, the market backdrop remains difficult. The association said consumers are highly sensitive to costs, a challenge that comes as breweries face rising expenses of their own. Energy issues remain part of that pressure, and the group said brewers are preparing for a market that is likely to stay demanding in the months ahead.

In response, breweries are turning to new products and to investments aimed at making production more efficient. The association said innovation is one of the main ways brewers are trying to protect margins while meeting changing demand. It added that nonalcoholic beers and other alternatively brewed products are expected to gain further importance in the future.

That outlook reflects a broader shift in drinking habits. Beer remains closely tied to weather, leisure and social occasions, and the summer heat clearly helped sales. But the association’s figures also show that weather alone is not enough to offset weaker consumer confidence and rising costs across the economy. A strong season can lift volumes for a time, yet the industry still faces pressure once seasonal demand eases.

The association said it remains optimistic that year-end celebrations and other drinking occasions will help demand recover and stabilize. Still, the latest numbers show a sector balancing short-term seasonal gains against longer-term changes in consumer behavior, with brewers relying more heavily on alcohol-free growth and production efficiency to navigate a slower and more expensive market.