vinetur

Italy's wine harvest faces drastic reduction due to extreme weather conditions

Italy's 2023 wine harvest faces potential historic low due to extreme weather

Thursday, August 3, 2023



Recent extreme weather occurrences, ranging from devastating heatwaves to fierce storms, are set to considerably shrink Italy's wine production for 2023. National farming organization, Coldiretti, released preliminary predictions today, suggesting that Italy's

wine harvest for the year could be as much as 14% smaller compared to the previous year.

In 2022, the nation produced approximately 50 million hectolitres of wine. Given the current climatic challenges, Coldiretti forecasts this figure may drop to around 43 million hectolitres for 2023. If this prognosis holds true, 2023's wine harvest would parallel years like 1948, 2007, and 2017, all of which are recorded as some of the smallest wine harvests in Italy's history.

Coldiretti emphasizes that Italy's vineyards are bearing the brunt of the global climate change crisis, as evidenced by the spate of extreme weather events. The repercussions of this crisis, however, are unevenly distributed across the country. While northern regions like Piedmont, Lombardy, and Veneto are currently reporting stable potential yields despite recent hailstorms, central and southern regions are staring at more significant drops in production.

Sicily, renowned for its rich vineyards, has been severely impacted. Communities there are grappling with widespread wildfires, posing significant concerns regarding heat and mildew's impact on the 2023 harvest. Arianna Occhipinti, representing the famed Occhipinti winery in southeastern Sicily, conveyed the gravity of the situation. "The 2023 harvest will be one of the most challenging in recent years. Following the intense heat, we were hit by heavy rains in May and June," she remarked. The onset of downy mildew could further reduce the Occhipinti winery's production by 30-35%. Yet, in spite of these setbacks, Occhipinti is optimistic about the grape quality. "The 2023 harvest will be lower in quantity but superior in quality," she added.

Other wine producers from Sicily echoed this sentiment. The Assovini Sicilia wine association recently commented on the quality of this year's grapes, noting that while some wineries might see a fall in production, the quality remains uncompromised. Producers in the Etna region, specifically, attributed the minimal mildew presence in their vineyards to beneficial altitude and breezes.

In western Sicily, Filippo Buttafuoco, a viticultural technician at Cantine Settesoli, expressed a similar optimism. Although the vineyard lost nearly 40% of its upcoming production due to recent heatwaves, the drop in temperature has revived the

unaffected grapes, potentially moderating the overall reduction in production.

Coldiretti emphasizes the importance of the coming weeks' conditions, reiterating that it's still too early to definitively quantify the extent of the impact on the nation's wine harvest for 2023.