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New Zealand Marks 30 Years of Sustainable Winegrowing

SWNZ Program Reaches 30-Year Benchmark in Sustainable Winegrowing

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New Zealand will celebrate 30 years of the Sustainable Winegrowing New Zealand (SWNZ) program in 2025, marking three decades of pioneering sustainable practices in the wine industry. Since its launch in 1995, SWNZ has become a global benchmark for sustainability, focusing on six key areas: climate change, water management, waste reduction, crop protection, soil health, and the well-being of people involved in the

industry.

Although New Zealand contributes only 1% of the world's total wine production, it exports 90% of its wines, with primary markets in the United Kingdom, the United States, and Australia. Chris Stroud, European marketing manager for New Zealand Wine, highlighted climate change as one of the sector's most significant challenges. In response to this, the organization introduced a carbon neutrality roadmap in August 2024, aiming for net-zero emissions by 2050. This move reinforces New Zealand's environmental commitment and its reputation as a producer of high-quality, sustainable wines.

The SWNZ program underscores a sustained effort to integrate sustainability into all aspects of wine production, a concept gaining traction in other winemaking regions worldwide. In Italy, Sicily leads the way in organic viticulture, accounting for 34% of the country's organic vineyard area. Through the SOStain Foundation, Sicily promotes collaboration between wineries and researchers, addressing sustainability from environmental, social, and economic perspectives.

In South America, Argentina is making strides with the Sustenta-Vitis project, supported by Wines of Argentina, which advocates for low-carbon practices in the wine sector. These initiatives reflect a growing industry-wide shift to align with consumer expectations. According to the International Wine and Spirits Record (IWSR), the demand for organic wines surged in 2024, particularly in key markets such as the United Kingdom and the United States.

With rising temperatures and increasing pressure to meet the United Nations' 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, New Zealand is taking proactive measures to mitigate climate change effects. These actions aim to preserve the country's competitiveness as a global leader in sustainable wine production.