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France Orders Uprooting of 28,000 Hectares of Vineyards to Tackle Wine Industry Crisis

Thousands of winegrowers in Southwest and Occitanie regions face tough choices as government offers €130 million in aid

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Nearly 28,000 hectares of vineyards in France are set to be uprooted following a government-backed plan aimed at addressing the ongoing crisis in the wine sector. The majority of the 5,824 applications for this program came from the Southwest and Occitanie regions, including Gironde, Aude, Gard, Hérault, Pyrénées-Orientales, and Gers. Most of the requests concern red wine grape varieties, according to Jérôme Despey, a senior official in the French wine industry.

The plan allows for both total and partial uprooting of vines. About 37% of the 27,929 hectares involved will be completely uprooted, with the affected winegrowers ceasing their activities altogether. The remaining 63% will see partial uprooting of vines that are at least ten years old. This measure is intended to help producers adapt their operations to changing market conditions. These figures are provisional and will be finalized after all applications are verified.

The French government announced a €130 million budget for this initiative at the end of 2025, offering €4,000 per hectare to participating growers. According to Despey, the number of applications aligns with initial expectations and should not exceed the allocated budget.

Despey explained that many winegrowers who applied for total uprooting were facing severe economic difficulties and could no longer sustain their businesses. For these producers, leaving the profession is a difficult decision but one made necessary by financial pressures. On the other hand, he noted that nearly two-thirds of applicants are choosing to remove only part of their vineyards—specifically those not suited to current market demands—in order to continue their work in viticulture.

Winegrowers have until December 31 to complete the uprooting process. The French wine sector has been grappling with structural challenges, including climate change and shifting consumer preferences. In recent years, there has been a noticeable decline in demand for red wine among consumers.

At the European level, both member states and lawmakers in Brussels have approved measures to support the wine industry. These include greater flexibility for vineyard removal and encouragement for the development of non-alcoholic wines. In France, a previous vineyard removal plan was implemented as recently as 2024 with a budget of €110 million.

The current crisis highlights deep changes in both production conditions and consumer habits across France’s traditional wine regions. The government’s response aims to help producers adapt while managing the economic and social impact on rural communities dependent on viticulture.