

FRANCE : 2014 HARVEST

The 2014 grape harvests are now fully underway in the middle of September. After 2 years of low yield harvests due to fluctuating weather conditions (violent thunderstorms, a cold and wet spring), weather conditions have been more favorable in 2014.

A harvest considered as average in quantity and good for quality.

The Ministry of Agriculture and the French wine-making sector have forecast a 2014 harvest of 45.4 million hectoliters, an increase of 7% compared to 2013 (42.3 million hectoliters) and close to the average over the last five years (45.6 million hectoliters over the period 2009-2013).

All the vineyards are not in the same situation. Production is expected to increase by 20% in the Champagne region. In Bordeaux, where vineyards were strongly impacted by hail storms in 2013, production could increase by 40%. On the other hand, in Burgundy, production looks stable. A number of appellations suffered thunderstorms at the end of June and in particular, the Côte de Beaune, Côte de Nuits, Côte châlonnaise and the north of Macon with about 6000 hectares impacted. In the Languedoc-Roussillon region, production could drop by about 10% compared to the average production over the last five years. The very hot and dry spring together with the violent hail storms at the beginning of July have taken their toll in terms of production.

A rather favorable weather

Apart from the hail storms which caused serious damage in a number of vineyards (Bourgogne and Languedoc-Roussillon), the weather in 2014 has been rather favorable for wine producers. The wet winter followed by a dry and sunny spring encouraged the development of both the vines and the grapes. On the other hand, the less favorable weather conditions during the summer (freshness and humidity) slowed down the maturation but the humidity had no serious consequences because the moderate temperatures limited the development of disease. The sunny and hot start to September has allowed the grapes to reach maturity in the most promising conditions. France could finally recover its position as the top wine producing country, a position occupied for the last four years by Italy which has suffered from unfavorable weather conditions this year.