Global Trends - Beverages

France: Champagne Yields Lowest in a Decade

Appellation authorities take a cautious approach, despite a surge in sales.

Maximum allowable yields in Champagne this year will be lower than they have been in 10 years, as producers look to reduce the amount of wine they have on hand.

Growers within the appellation are limited to 10,000 kilograms per hectare. A further 500kg per hectare can be released from the Réserve Individuelle (RI) in February to make the total appellation volume 10,500 kg per hectare, or about 307 million bottles. Réserve Individuelle is still wine that hasn’t been through secondary fermentation. This stock is held in tanks by individual producers to be used when vineyards are affected by natural disasters limiting overall production.

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Major Wine Producing Countries

Italy Breathes a Sigh of Relief over 2015 Vintage

After a lousy 2014 harvest, growers and producers are keeping their fingers crossed as the grapes ripen.

It's still early to be talking about the quality of the 2015 vintage, but Italian growers are simultaneously breathing a sigh of relief and keeping their fingers crossed.

Generally, life is looking up for growers across Italy this year, with good rain levels in the early part of the season offset by blazing heat in July. So far, so good, but there is some concern among growers about the intensity of the heat, although weather forecasts suggest a cooler August.

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Bacteria behind lethal vine disease found on French soil

Bacteria known to cause Pierce's Disease that has blighted California vineyards for years has been found in France for the first time.

The Xylella fastidiosa bacteria has been discovered on the island of Corsica, just over 18 months after its first recorded appearance in Europe, in olive groves in Italy.

News of its spread to Corsica prompted a fierce reaction from Europe’s plant protection organisation (EPPO), which said this week that ‘eradication measures have been immediately implemented’.

It is a potentially worrying development for wine producers – and wine drinkers.

Pierce’s Disease was discovered in 1892 by Newton B. Pierce (1856–1916) on grapes in California near Anaheim. There is no cure and there are no resistant Vitis Vinifera grape varieties. Chardonnay and Pinot Noir are especially sensitive while Riesling, Sylvaner and Chenin are more resistant.

Infected vines appear water stressed, 'Leaves become red or yellow in mid-summer, berries shrivel [and] dried leaves fall,’ its guidance says.

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