



USDA Foreign Agricultural Service

# GAIN Report

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## France

### Product Brief

### Wine Harvest Outlook

### 2008

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**Report Highlights:**

The 2008 French wine harvest is estimated to reach 43.6 million hectoliters, or approximately 5.0% less than the 2007 harvest. Despite unfavorable weather conditions throughout the wine growing regions, the crop is expected to be of high quality.

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Includes PSD Changes: No  
Includes Trade Matrix: No  
Annual Report  
Paris [FR1]  
[FR]

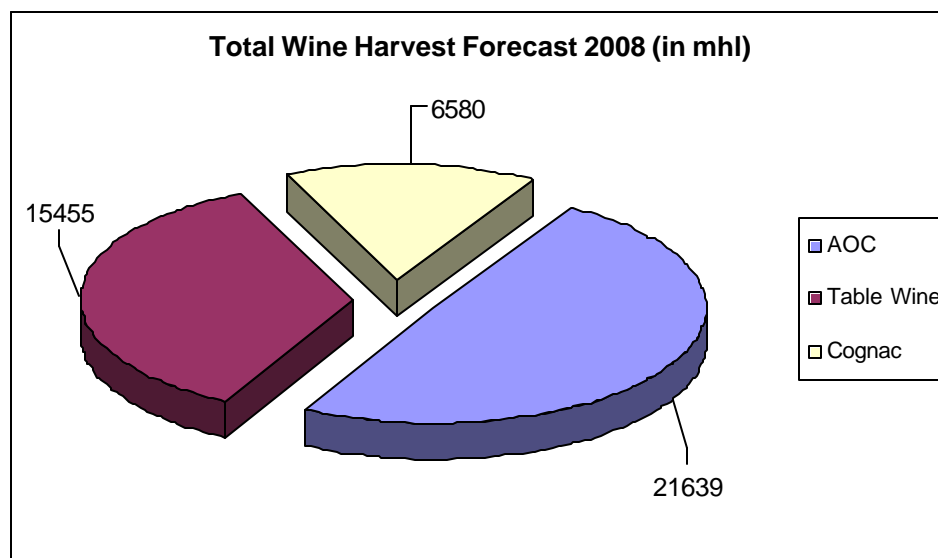
## Summary

The 2008 French wine crop is forecast to fall below the 2007 levels, which was itself an uncharacteristically small harvest. Poor weather conditions and decreased land under cultivation are largely responsible for the lower production numbers. Both the low volume and the high quality of the harvest are expected to positively impact the market price for the 2008 French wine harvest.

## Harvest Forecast

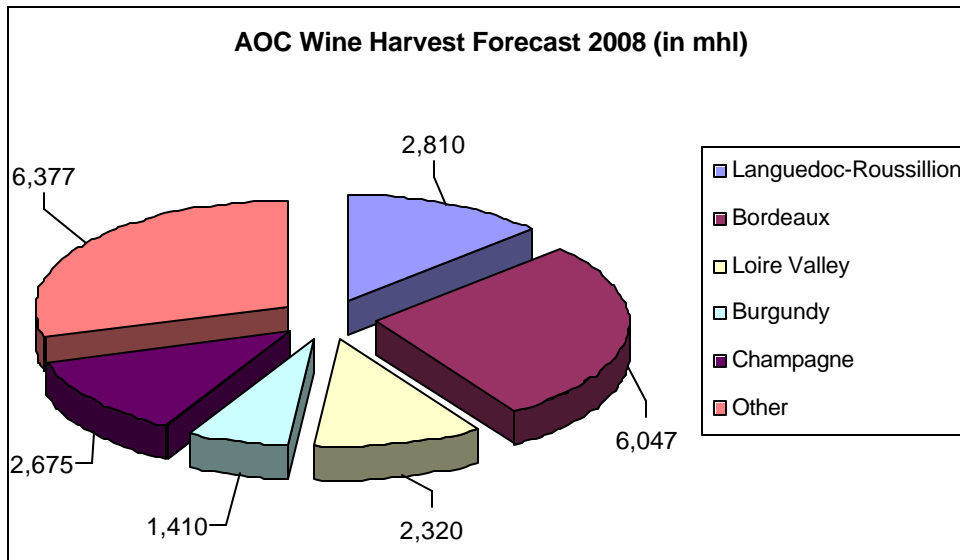
In early September, Viniflor, France's National Fruit, Vegetable, Wine and Horticultural Office, lowered its 2008 wine crop estimate from 45.8 million hectoliters (mhl) to 43.6 mhl, about 5.0% lower than the 2007 harvest. The harvest in 2007 was also atypically small at 46.5 mhl compared to an average harvest between 53 and 58 mhl.

Appellation of origin wines (AOC) are projected at 21.64 mhl, about 6.8% less than 2007. Table wine harvest should reach 5.45 mhl, or 8.5% less than the previous year, while Cognac and Armagnac production is expected to be 2.3% higher than last year's production with a harvest of 6.58 mhl.

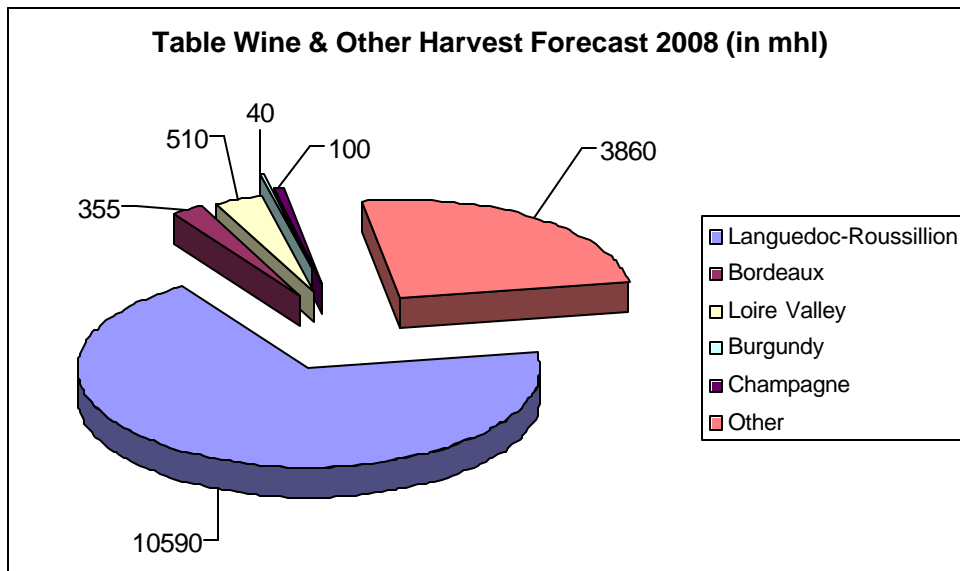


Source: *Forecast of Harvest – Viniflor, Sept. 2, 2008.*

Unfavorable weather affected many of the wine growing regions. An unusually mild winter prevented the vines from resting. A late spring frost was particularly harmful in the Loire Valley and Bordeaux, and excessive humidity through the spring and summer fostered the proliferation of mildew, parasites, and other crop maladies. Champagne, Burgundy and Alsace, later ripening regions, were not as adversely affected by the bad weather early in the growing season as was Languedoc-Roussillon. In addition, an ongoing EU wine reform measure, which provides a premium for producers to uproot their vines, has resulted in a reduction of almost 14,000 hectares of French land under vine for each of the last three years, yielding approximately 800,000 fewer hectoliters of wine per year since 2005.



Source: Forecast of Harvest – Viniflor, Sept. 2, 2008.



Source: Forecast of Harvest – Viniflor, Sept. 2, 2008.

A warm and sunny September, just before the harvest, provided a strong finish for the vines. Though all regions report less dense grape clusters and weaker volume, careful selection of the remaining grapes is expected to yield a high quality harvest. Reports from Champagne indicate that the quality of its grapes is excellent. Vintners are cautiously optimistic that lower stocks of high quality wine will increase demand and bring a higher market price for their wines.