

Voluntary Report – Voluntary - Public Distribution

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Report Name: British Columbia Extends Temporary Supports for 2024
Vintage

Country: Canada

Post: Ottawa

Report Category: Agricultural Situation, Export Accomplishments - Market Access, Wine

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Report Highlights:

On July 25, 2024, the Province of British Columbia announced additional temporary supports for B.C. wineries to support production of the 2024 vintage. These supports enable all B.C. wineries to produce a 2024 vintage using imported wine grapes, juice, and unfinished wines to supplement a short domestic wine grape crop. Originally, the temporary supports were linked to a 12-month sales period from April 1, 2025 to March 31, 2026. The support period has now been extended to a 36-month sales period from April 1, 2025 to March 31, 2028. This will enable wineries to have more flexibility to market the 2024 vintage and address concerns that the original period would have been detrimental for red wines and sparkling white wines which require a longer cellaring period.

In January 2024, an extreme cold event decimated the 2024 Okanagan Valley wine grape crop. Industry estimates that the January event caused a 90 percent crop loss for the 2024 wine grape crop and 15 percent of grapevines were destroyed. The Province of British Columbia previously announced a CAD 26 million vine replant program and CAD 92.6 million through the Production Insurance and AgriStability program. Additional measures to support a 2024 vintage were also announced by the province provided:

- An exemption for land-based wineries to the requirement that 25 percent of their agricultural inputs (i.e. grapes) be from their owned or leased land;
- Permit wineries to apply for a temporary waiver to the 4,500-liter minimum production requirement.
- Enabling land-based wineries to use non-B.C. grapes, juice, or unfinished wines to produce their 2024 vintage and providing a 12-month sales period of mark-up relief to sell these wines.

These measures enable all B.C. wineries to supplement the domestic wine grape crop with imported inputs with land-based wineries eligible to produce a 2024 vintage volume equal to the previous five-year Olympic average of production to sell during the 12-month window. This 12-month window would have been too short to support production of certain red wines and sparkling whites, which require a longer cellaring period. Following advocacy, B.C. has now extended the eligible sales period to 36 months, from April 1, 2025 to March 31, 2028. This will continue to apply exclusively for the 2024 vintage. Any wine produced using imported grapes or juice will not be eligible to carry the B.C. Vintners Quality Alliance (VQA) label which has strict requirements for 100 percent B.C.-grown. Industry will rework labels to ensure transparency and compliance with federal labeling regulations to reflect which wines are produced from imported grapes and juice.

B.C. notes that the wine industry generates CAD 3.75 billion annually for the province and employs over 14,000 full-time workers with 350 licensed grape wine wineries. The B.C. wine industry is also integral to B.C. tourism, with over one million visitors annually to B.C. wineries. In 2023, B.C. wines accounted for 45 percent of wine sales in the province.

FAS/Canada estimates that roughly 25,841 MT of additional grapes (or equivalent as converted to juice or unfinished wine needs) will be needed to produce the 2024 vintage. We calculated this by taking 90 percent (which is the estimated 2024 crop loss) of the Olympic average of the Statistics Canada marketed production data from 2019-2023.

To educate industry stakeholders on the developments, [AIDV Canada](#) is organizing a [webinar](#) on September 17 titled “Regulatory Roadmap for Importing Grapes by British Columbia Wineries”.

Attachments:

No Attachments.