

World wine production 'to hit 50-year low'

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Global wine production is expected to fall to its lowest in more than 50 years, according to the International Organisation of Vine and Wine (OIV).

The group blamed the decline on extreme weather in Italy, France and Spain - the world's top three producers.

Total world output is projected to fall 8% from last year to 246.7 million hectolitres.

This could erode a global surplus caused by low demand after the financial crisis of 2007-08.

According to OIV estimates, Italian wine production will fall 23% to 39.3 million hectolitres.

In France, levels will drop 19% to 36.7 million, while Spanish production will be 15% lower at 33.5 million.

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A hectolitre is 100 litres, equivalent to just over 133 standard 75cl bottles of wine.

But for wine-growing regions outside Europe, forecasts are more optimistic.

Australian production is expected to rise 6% to 13.9 million hectolitres, and as much as 25% in Argentina to 11.8 million hectolitres.

Output in the US - the world's fourth-largest producer and its biggest consumer - is also due to fall by only 1%, but the OIV said its forecast was based on data collected before the outbreak of wildfires in California's largest wine-producing regions: Napa Valley and Sonoma County.

There was no data available for producers such as China, which produced 11.4 million hectolitres last year.

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