New Zealand wine exports fall 33% in November as all major markets decline

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Wine exports slumped to $170.3 million in November 2023, down a third year-on-year, with the United States, Australia and the United Kingdom all posting steep declines in a difficult month for the sector.

Headline figures

New Zealand exported $170.3 million worth of wine in November 2023, a 33.3% decline from the $255.1 million recorded in November 2022. Export volume fell 32.0% to 23.0 million litres, while the average price edged down to $7.40 per litre. The month's result represented a sharp drop from October's $208.0 million and marked the weakest performance since May's $125.5 million.

Despite the November downturn, the rolling 12-month total to November held steady at $2,145.8 million, virtually unchanged from the previous year (-0.0%).

Broad-based market weakness

All three of New Zealand's largest export destinations recorded substantial declines. The United States remained the top market with $65.4 million in November shipments, accounting for 38.4% of total exports, but values fell 28.9% year-on-year. Australia, the second-largest market, saw an even steeper 38.1% decline to $37.1 million (21.8% share). The United Kingdom dropped 35.0% to $29.0 million (17.0% share).

Canada, the fourth-largest destination, declined 27.6% to $10.4 million, while Germany fell 19.5% to $7.1 million.

New Zealand wine reached 54 destination markets during the month.

Sharp falls in France and China, gains in Belgium and Poland

Among markets exceeding $0.5 million in value, France posted the steepest decline, plunging 61.6% to $2.5 million. Japan fell 60.9% to $0.7 million, while China dropped 56.0% to $2.0 million. Ireland declined 49.9% to $1.8 million, and the Netherlands fell 42.2% to $1.3 million.

Against this pattern of widespread contraction, two markets showed robust growth. Belgium surged 53.0% to $1.6 million, and Poland climbed 34.5% to $1.2 million, though both remained modest in absolute terms.

Bottled wine hit harder than bulk

Bottled wine in containers of two litres or less accounted for $117.6 million of November exports, down 38.1% year-on-year. Bulk wine shipped in containers exceeding 10 litres totalled $49.5 million, a more moderate decline of 21.4%, and represented 29.1% of total export value.

The pricing gap between the two formats remained substantial: bottled wine averaged $10.62 per litre, more than double the $4.37 per litre for bulk shipments. Bulk wine's relative resilience in a challenging month suggests importers maintained purchasing programmes for lower-priced product while cutting back more sharply on premium bottled stock.

Monthly context

November's result continues a volatile pattern through 2023. After the traditional summer peak of $259.8 million in December 2022, exports dropped to $146.6 million in January before recovering through the autumn. The sector posted three consecutive months above $190 million from August to October before November's setback.

Note on data

These figures are drawn from Statistics New Zealand's official merchandise trade data for HS code 2204 (wine of fresh grapes). Statistics for the most recent month are provisional and subject to revision in subsequent releases.