New Zealand wine exports edge down in August as bulk shipments slide

August 2026 · Generated 27 September 2026 · Source: Stats NZ overseas merchandise trade (HS 2204)

Wine exports fell 0.9% to $213.9 million in August 2026, with gains in bottled wine offset by a sharp decline in bulk shipments and contrasting fortunes across major markets.

August exports hold steady despite modest decline

New Zealand exported $213.9 million of wine in August 2026, down 0.9% on the same month a year earlier. Volume declined in step, falling 0.8% to 30.4 million litres, leaving the average price virtually unchanged at $7.04 per litre. The country shipped wine to 58 destination markets during the month.

The rolling 12-month total to August 2026 reached $2,106.2 million, down 1.6% year-on-year, reflecting the sector's continued headwinds.

Diverging fortunes across key markets

The United States remained New Zealand's largest export market with $56.6 million in shipments, claiming a 26.4% share, though the value slipped 1.6% year-on-year. The United Kingdom took second place at $50.1 million (23.4% share) but recorded a substantial 16.5% decline.

Australia held its position as the third-largest market with $30.5 million, edging up 0.3%. Canada delivered strong growth, rising 23.2% to $23.0 million and capturing a 10.7% share of total exports.

Among smaller but fast-growing markets, Singapore posted the strongest percentage gain, surging 113.0% to $7.8 million. China climbed 67.3% to $10.7 million, while Sweden jumped 67.4% to $0.6 million. The Netherlands rose 28.4% to $1.9 million and Malaysia gained 28.8% to $0.6 million.

Offsetting these gains, several European markets declined sharply. France fell 24.7% to $5.9 million, Denmark dropped 28.7% to $0.7 million, and Japan tumbled 34.0% to $1.3 million. Hong Kong declined 13.2% to $1.8 million.

Bulk shipments drag on overall performance

The August figures revealed a clear divergence in packaging formats. Bottled wine exports—defined as containers of two litres or less, including sparkling—rose 2.5% year-on-year to $161.0 million. In contrast, bulk shipments in containers exceeding 10 litres fell 9.3% to $52.9 million, representing 24.7% of total export value.

The price differential between formats remained stark: bottled wine averaged $10.59 per litre compared to $3.48 per litre for bulk. This threefold gap reflects the premium positioning of finished, branded product against commodity-style bulk shipments destined for bottling offshore. The declining bulk segment appears to have weighed on overall export performance, even as higher-value bottled exports showed resilience.

Seasonal context

August's $213.9 million result represented a recovery from the winter trough, with the month typically seeing stronger export activity. The figure stood well above the $123.1 million recorded in January 2026 and matched the higher levels seen in peak months such as October 2025 ($217.7 million).

Data notes

Statistics New Zealand figures for the most recent month are initially provisional and subject to revision as late declarations are processed and classifications finalised.