SAUVIGNON BLANC 2.0

Public Summary - December 2024

Summary of progress during this quarter

The Sauvignon Blanc 2.0 Programme continues to make strong progress in developing a collection of novel Sauvignon Blanc clones, advancing trait selection methodologies, and engaging with industry stakeholders on emerging gene technology legislation.

During this quarter a new grapevine selection vineyard was established, uniquely designed to facilitate the rapid growth of immature vines and their preparation for genetic and trait-based selection.

The new clones produced during year 3 are growing well. In response, the decision was made to bring forward the planned vineyard planting date to the end of 2024. Through a concerted effort, all 6,000 vines have been planted and are showing good adaptation to their environment.

In the coming quarter Programme scientists will continue to engage with the government's proposed changes to the gene technology legislation and will take a lead in educating the New Zealand wine sector on the technical aspects of the Bill that was introduced during this quarter.

Key highlights and achievements

- **Successful vineyard establishment:** 6,000 new Sauvignon Blanc clones, produced during year 3, have been planted in the new vine selection vineyard and are adapting well, with a survival rate exceeding 97%.
- **Phylloxera and mildew screening:** New molecular diagnostics (PCR & amplicon sequencing) were implemented for phylloxera detection, confirming its absence in the vineyard. Collaborative leaf-based mildew tolerance assays are in development with international partners.
- **Genomic screening expansion:** Early nanopore sequencing assessments of a pilot set of ~100 clones have been completed, supporting the refinement of bioinformatic workflows for genetic variation analysis.
- **Industry engagement:** Programme stakeholders met with researchers at the third annual Grantors' Workshop in Blenheim to discuss technical progress, new ideas, and upcoming work.
- **Technical and regulatory education:** Programme scientists have taken a leading role in discussions on the proposed gene technology legislation, focussing on educating the New Zealand wine sector about the science being debated.

Upcoming focus areas

- **Sample collection**: Securing samples of leaves and other tissues so that selection work can continue during the dormancy period.
- **Scaling genetic selection efforts**: Implementing high-throughput genotyping workflows to analyse larger clone populations.
- **Autumn vineyard management**: Care of vines to maximise vegetative growth ahead of winter.
- **Advancing mildew tolerance screening**: Use established mildew cultures for manual screening assays on detached grapevine leaves and deploy automated imaging technology to scale up testing.
- **Strengthening industry engagement**: Continued consultation with the New Zealand wine industry and regulatory bodies to refine policies for future research.
- **Enhancing impact**: Incorporate feedback from the Programme's Technical Advisory Group and begin drafting technical workplans for year 5.

Investment

Investment period	Industry cash	Industry in-kind	MPI cash	Total investment
During this quarter	$ 508,266	$ 41,251	$ 366,345	$ 915,862
Programme to date	$ 3,399,291	$ 220,110	$ 2,412,934	$ 6,032,335