BRAGATO RESEARCH INSTITUTE
RANGAHAU KAREPE, WĀINA O AOTEAROA

New Zealand Wine
Altogether Unique.

Ministry for Primary Industries
Manatū Ahu Matua

SAUVIGNON BLANC 2.0

Public Summary - September 2025

Summary of progress during this quarter

During the winter of 2025, the programme has advanced its goal of establishing a repository of genetic diversity from which new, improved Sauvignon Blanc clones can be identified and selected. Production of the second half of the vine population is now well underway, and the vines produced last year have been pruned in preparation for the first year of trait data collection.

Meanwhile, pilot studies in DNA sequencing, mildew susceptibility testing, frost tolerance, and water use efficiency have provided valuable selection criteria that the research team will be looking to scale up over the growing season. These have been guided and informed by expert technical advisors in the USA and Europe who have generously contributed their knowledge to the programme.

As the research matures, the programme has seen industry become more directly involved, with members attending in-person events and online webinars and grantors contributing equipment, plant material, and their valuable advice to the establishment of the breeding vineyard. In the coming season, the programme will develop and test protocols for propagating new clones by bud-grafting them onto established vines.

Key highlights and achievements

- Programme-led industry engagement events were held, centred on modern breeding strategies and technologies.
- The installation of the second half of the breeding vineyard is progressing ahead of schedule.
- Genetic testing protocols have been validated and can reliably distinguish all types of genetic variation among grapevine clones.
- Pilot selection projects for water use efficiency and mildew susceptibility were completed this winter.
- Powdery mildew cultures and vine testing protocols have been prepared for disease susceptibility testing.
- Programme Manager Darrell Lizamore visited collaborators and technical advisors in California and New York to exchange knowledge about trait assessment technology and best practices for vine selection.

Upcoming Focus Areas

- Complete tissue culture plant production and vineyard development.
- Scale sequencing and trait selection workflows and implement automated mildew assays.
- Test bud-grafting approaches for propagating new clones in Marlborough.
- Continue industry education and member consultation on gene technologies and market access.
- Advance collaborations with the NGV Programme on stakeholder engagement, AI, and automated phenotyping.

Investment

Investment period	Industry cash	Industry in-kind	MPI cash	Total investment
During this quarter	$ 264,585	$ 81,750	$ 230,890	$ 577,226
Programme to date	$ 4,451,315	$ 338,459	$ 3,193,183	$ 7,982,957