

## SAUVIGNON BLANC 2.0

### Public Summary - December 2025

#### Summary of progress during this quarter

During the December 2025 quarter, the Programme moved further into the selection phase while completing a major delivery milestone: 10,000 new Sauvignon Blanc clones have now been produced through tissue culture, and over 8,000 are already established in the breeding vineyard for future screening.

The team has advanced tools to identify promising vines efficiently, based on industry-prioritised traits. Workflows that use DNA sequencing and automated trait measurements have been tested. The best of these are now being scaled to suit the large population size. Disease susceptibility testing, aimed at identifying vines with increased resilience against powdery mildew, is currently being deployed across the first tranche of mature vines using the Blackbird imaging platform. Phenology measurements are being recorded to establish variances in the timing of budburst and flowering. The results of pilot trials of water-use efficiency and frost tolerance are also being analysed with the goal of adapting these for broader population screening.

Working with industry partners, the programme has tested grafting approaches that might accelerate promising new clones from discovery to commercial evaluation. Also this quarter, visits from European technical advisors have contributed to impact through in-person Programme review and industry engagement.

#### Key highlights and achievements

- Tissue culture production is complete, achieving the Programme target of 10,000 new SB clones.
- A 4-hectare breeding vineyard is now established, with vines showing good growth and low mortality.
- Plant screening workflows were scaled up, with robotic disease-susceptibility testing and phenology tracking deployed over several hundred vines.
- Buds collected from the new clone vineyard were grafted onto established vines in Marlborough, as part of a grantor-hosted trial of methods to advance selected clones in the future.

- Three international Programme technical advisors visited NZ to review progress, meet with industry stakeholders and present at the International Cool Climate Wine Symposium.

## Upcoming Focus Areas

- Complete planting of remaining field-ready vines and maintain the immature cohort through winter to maximise establishment next season.
- Finalise strategies for genetic selection and continue deploying mildew and phenology workflows.
- Adapt results of the water-use efficiency and frost tolerance pilot trials to large population screening.
- Continue monitoring vine material transferred by bud grafting and refine protocols for future seasons.

## Investment

Investment period	Industry cash	Industry in-kind	MPI cash	Total investment
During this quarter	\$ 281,854	\$ 10,966	\$ 194,764	\$ 486,909
Programme to date	\$ 4,732,495	\$ 349,424	\$ 3,387,946	\$ 8,469,866