

## SAUVIGNON BLANC 2.0

### Public Summary - March 2026

#### Summary of progress during this quarter

Building on the vineyard establishment work completed in 2025, the new year marked a shift towards collecting in-vineyard data to compare screening methods and determine which of these are scalable and cost-effective. With most field ready vines now growing in the breeding vineyard, and a large population approaching physiological maturity, work this quarter focused on generating the evidence needed to shape Year 6 selection.

Trait evaluation this quarter focused on powdery mildew susceptibility, water use efficiency, frost tolerance, and phenology (timing of seasonal plant development). Several methods were run at scale for the first time, producing datasets that are now being digitised and analysed to identify provisional candidates for follow-up testing and to confirm which methods can be optimised for ongoing selection.

The Programme also tested practical pathways for moving SB2.0 material into Marlborough, completing a comparative propagation trial that clarified trade-offs between speed and reliability. International technical advisors were hosted in person to review progress and challenge Year 6 priorities with the team and industry stakeholders.

#### Key highlights and achievements

- Planting was completed, with low mortality (<5%) maintained, and all plants added to the virtual database.
- Large-scale trait screening data, focused on phenological timing, disease resistance and water-use efficiency, was collected in the breeding vineyard.
- Powdery mildew isolate cultures from around New Zealand were established, assessed for relative virulence, and used for high-throughput screening of susceptibility among new clones.
- A Marlborough propagation trial compared top grafting and nursery grafting, showing top grafting can be faster, but outcomes vary by site, while nursery grafting is currently the most reliable pathway.

- International technical advisors were hosted for an in-person review of technical progress and upcoming priorities.

## Upcoming Focus Areas

- Complete winter management and establishment of remaining immature vines.
- Finalise the Year 6 selection strategy and structure of the selection process.
- Complete analysis and preliminary candidate selection for mildew, drought and frost traits.
- Optimise validated data collection methods for more efficient use across larger vine populations.
- Refine accelerated propagation protocols in Marlborough based on trial learnings.
- Continue targeted engagement with industry and technical advisors.

## Investment

Investment period	Industry cash	Industry in-kind	MPI cash	Total investment
During this quarter	\$ 549,800	\$ 0	\$ 366,533	\$ 916,333
Programme to date	\$ 5,282,295	\$ 349,424	\$ 3,754,480	\$ 9,386,199