

SAUVIGNON BLANC 2.0

Public Summary - June 2026

The Sauvignon Blanc 2.0 Programme completed its fifth year with the planned population of new vines produced and the breeding vineyard infrastructure in place. Attention is now on upscaling selection protocols so that potentially valuable traits can be confidently identified from among the genetic diversity produced. During the quarter, approximately 1,300 mature vines were screened for powdery mildew susceptibility, and first-pass evaluation was also completed for water-use efficiency. These studies identified provisional candidates for further testing, although additional evaluation is needed before any improved performance can be confirmed.

The Programme also strengthened the systems needed for the next phase of selection. Each vine has been identified and mapped to link its vineyard location with future trait and genetic information, and planning progressed for replicated evaluation in Marlborough. Methods for assessing frost adaptation continued to be developed, supported by a new co-funded PhD project, while international collaboration was strengthened through participation in the international grapevine breeding and genetics symposium. New Zealand was selected to host the next symposium in 2030, providing an opportunity to showcase Programme outcomes and innovation within the New Zealand wine industry towards the end of the Programme term.

Key highlights and achievements

- Completed production of the planned SB2.0 vine population and the installation of breeding-vineyard infrastructure.
- Screened approximately 1,300 mature vines for powdery mildew susceptibility and identified provisional candidates for confirmation testing.
- Completed first-pass water-use efficiency screening and identified candidates for further evaluation.
- Refined methods for assessing frost response and secured co-funding for a PhD project to improve their practical application.
- Strengthened traceability by assigning each vine a unique identifier and mapping it within the digital vineyard database.
- New Zealand was selected to host the next international grapevine breeding and genetics symposium in 2030.

Upcoming Focus Areas

- Confirm the Year 6 selection framework and use current results to establish provisional groups of promising vines.
- Repeat powdery mildew and water-use efficiency testing using more highly replicated trials and isolates prioritised by genetic and virulence-testing data.
- Maintain the remaining immature vines through winter and complete spring planting.
- Prepare traceable plant material for replicated evaluation in Lincoln and Marlborough.
- Continue developing practical frost and water-use efficiency screening methods.
- Progress targeted genetic analysis of vines identified through trait screening.

Investment

Investment period	Industry cash	Industry in-kind	MPI cash	Total investment
During this quarter	\$ 404,521	\$ 130,037	\$ 356,372	\$ 890,931
Programme to date	\$ 5,686,816	\$ 479,461	\$ 4,110,852	\$ 10,277,130