

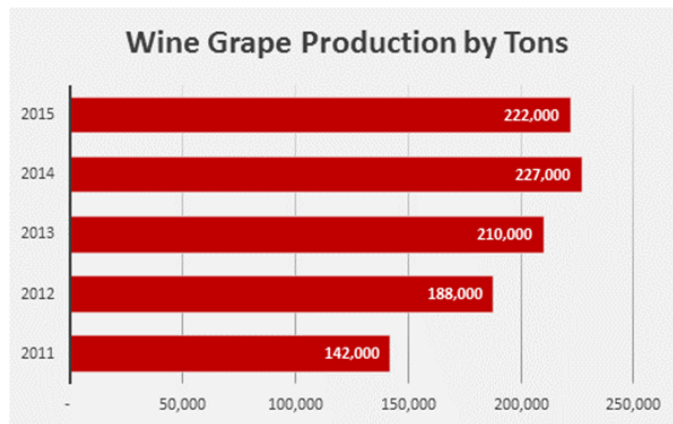
**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Grape Crush Report Reveals Lighter Harvest for Washington State in 2015**

*Tonnage is down 2 percent from the prior year but winemakers thrilled about quality*

**SEATTLE** (Feb. 8, 2016) – Washington State’s wine grape harvest in 2015 totaled 222,000 tons, down 2 percent from the prior year, said a report released today by the Washington State Wine Commission and the United States Department of Agriculture. Grape growers attributed the decrease to several factors including unusually warm weather, which resulted in a smaller berry size.

Though 2015 was a lighter year for Washington State, grape tonnage continues to trend upward. The 2014 harvest totaled 227,000 tons, while tonnage in 2013 was 210,000 and 188,000 in 2012.



In 2015, red varieties increased 5 percent, while white varieties decreased 8 percent, bringing the varietal ratio to 51 percent red and 49 percent white. Cabernet Sauvignon was the top-producing grape at 47,400 tons, a 12 percent increase from 2014. Riesling was second at 44,100 tons, followed by Chardonnay at 42,000 and Merlot with 35,200 tons.

Winemakers are excited for the quality of the 2015 vintage. Smaller berries typically result in full-bodied, intense, fruit-driven wines.

“Wine is an agricultural product, which means every year is different,” said Steve Warner, president of the Washington State Wine Commission, which represents every licensed winery and grape grower in the state. “Though the 2015 harvest was slightly lighter than originally anticipated, we’re thrilled by what we’re tasting. This is another great vintage for Washington State.”

**About the Washington State Wine Commission:**

The Washington State Wine Commission represents every licensed winery and wine grape grower in Washington State. Guided by an appointed board, WSWC provides a marketing platform to raise positive awareness of the Washington State wine industry and generate greater demand for its wines. Funded almost entirely by the industry through assessments based on grape and wine sales, WSWC is a state government agency, established by the legislature in 1987. To learn more, visit [www.washingtonwine.org](http://www.washingtonwine.org).

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