

# Starting a UK wine production business

Guidance for UK wine producers on setting up a wine business.

This guidance is for individuals looking to set up or adapt their wine business.

This can include businesses in wine production, such as vineyards and wine makers, as well as businesses in wine trading, including importers, exporters and wholesalers.

Further guidance is available from your [regional wine inspector](#).

## Setting up a vineyard

### Vineyard site selection

Site selection is critical to the success of a vineyard. Consultation with specialist land agents, management organisations, or a specialist viticulture consultancy is highly recommended.

Planting vineyards in protected locations, such as national parks, may require consultation with the [National Parks Authority](#). This should be undertaken during the evaluation process.

### Vineyard planning permission

Change of use of land or buildings needs to be considered during the evaluation process. Planning permission for buildings such as wineries or bottling facilities may be required.

Some buildings, such as barns and equipment storage, may have been constructed under agricultural notices. This may restrict their change of use. You should approach your local planning authority for more information.

### Vineyard registration

All vineyards over 0.1 hectare (approximately a quarter of an acre) in size are required to be registered with us at the Food Standards Agency. Owners must register their vines no later than 6 months after planting them and must notify us of subsequent changes.

You can [register a vineyard or winery through our online service](#).

### Selection and application of Plant Protection Products

It is recommended that to ensure that the correct Plant Protection Products, or other agricultural chemicals are selected and used, that the services of an agronomist, consultant or person with the correct qualifications are used.

If you wish to carry out this work yourself, you will need certificates of competence to apply Plant Protection Products (PPP's) with a sprayer. You must also undertake training and pass the relevant Pesticide Application (PA) exams. In the UK the only body recognised for training and testing is the [City & Guilds Land Based Services \(formerly NPTC\)](#).

The Green Book produced by WineGB provides details of approved agricultural chemicals that can be used in UK vineyards. WineGB membership is required to access this document.

## Registration and licensing for wine businesses

Owners of food businesses, including wineries must register as a food business with their local authority.

It is recommended that any business importing, exporting or wholesaling wines [contact their regional Wine Standards inspector](#) to register their business and receive a unique WSB number.

### Wine producer's licence

If you produce or intend to produce wine for sale, you must hold an excise licence. You may be liable for alcohol duty payments. The type of excise licence required is known as a [wine producer's licence](#).

### Alcohol Wholesale Registration Scheme

All alcohol wholesalers must be registered with HMRC under the [Alcohol Wholesale Registration Scheme \(AWRS\)](#). It is an offence to supply alcohol by wholesale without being registered. It is also an offence for companies to purchase alcohol from a non-registered wholesaler.

### Alcohol licences

[Alcohol licences](#) are not needed for the wholesale sale of wine to other licensed premises or to other wine traders. Anybody selling wine to the "final" consumer, irrespective of the quantity involved must hold a Personal Licence and the wine must be delivered from licensed premises.

Personal Licences are issued by the local authority in whose area the vendor lives. Premises Licences are issued by the local authority where the premises are located. If you wish to sell wine directly to individuals, contact your local authority.

### Selling online or by mail order

If you intend to sell your wine over the internet or by mail order in addition to the normal Alcohol Licences, personal and premises Licences, you will need to comply with The Electronic Commerce Regulations 2002 and [distance selling guidelines](#). Contact your Local Authority's Trading Standards Officer for more information.

## Wine production

[Wine making](#) may be undertaken either at the vineyard or winery. This can be done by the winery staff, or by using a contract winemaker at a different site.

It is recommended that all wines are tested during the winemaking process, either by winery staff or by a laboratory that can provide verifiable testing. This should be UKAS approved or equivalent.

If the wines are being produced as part of a quality wine scheme, then independent testing verification is required as part of the [application process](#).

In January each year, wine producers are required to submit a Production Declaration ([WSB21](#) or [WSB21b](#)) for wine and other grape products they have produced from the previous year's

harvest.

These returns indicate where the grapes have been vinified and how much wine has been produced in the UK. They also provide part of the audit trail to support Quality or Regional Wine applications.

We have more information, including relevant document, in [wine production](#).

## Wine classification

Wine is classified as either;

- 'Wine'
- 'Wine with a Protected Geographical Indication' (PGI) e.g. Regional Wine
- 'Wine with a Protected Designation of Origin' (PDO) e.g. Quality Wine

## Wine

Wine is the term used to refer to the basic product made in accordance with the wine regulations, but which has not been assessed or certified in any way. We advise producers to obtain a post-bottling analysis and keep the results with their winery records for due diligence purposes and to assist in labelling. Wine's of this type are permitted to display grape varieties and or vintage years should producers wish to do so, in accordance with the regulations.

## PDO and PGI Wine Schemes

The terms Protected Designation of Origin (PDO) and Protected Geographical Indication (PGI) are used to describe certain food types. PDO applies to Quality Wine and PGI applies to Regional Wine.

These terms are used to describe wines which are produced within specific areas and which meet certain quality standards. The schemes involve the assessment and analysis of the wines to ensure they meet the relevant criteria.

Wines that pass the schemes can use the protected term "English", "Welsh". They can also show vine varieties, vintage and certain geographical information on the label.

Wines may be marketed as English (Welsh) Quality Wine (Protected Designation of Origin) or English (Welsh) Regional Wine (Protected Geographical Indication) if they meet analytical and tasting criteria and the verification checks of the producer's winery records by the Wine Standards Inspectors are satisfactory.

Details of the various UK wine schemes are available on the [WineGB website](#).

## Wine labelling

Different levels of wine have different labelling restrictions and requirements. We have further [wine labelling guidance](#), including details of allergen labelling requirements.

Label designs can be checked with FSA Wine Standards to ensure regulatory compliance. Further guidance on labelling requirements is available from your [regional wine inspector](#).