

Drought rushes wine grape harvest in Calif.

By Esther Mobley, San Francisco Chronicle

In Northern California's wine country, the 2015 harvest has arrived shockingly early, amid years of drought that have progressively shifted vines' growing season earlier into the year.

Winemakers are scrambling to keep pace, and many worry about the financial implications of an extremely low-yielding crop.

"I've been making wine for 38 years, and this is the second-earliest harvest I've ever seen," said Eileen Crane, CEO and winemaker of Domaine Carneros, who began picking on July 31.

Not only has the harvest come early, it's progressing more quickly. In many cases, especially for Pinot producers, a picking schedule that would stretch over a month is being condensed into about a week.

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