



# American Malting Barley Association, Inc.

740 North Plankinton Avenue, Suite 830 / Milwaukee, WI 53203 / (414) 272-4640 / Fax: (414) 272-4631 / <http://www.AMBAinc.org>

## Press Release: Increased Interest in Growing Malting Barley

Contact: Scott Heisel, [scott.amba@sbcglobal.net](mailto:scott.amba@sbcglobal.net), 414-272-4640

February 19, 2014 - Barley acreage in the US has declined to levels not seen in over 100 years, but the interest in growing malting barley has spread to regions in the US that have not grown the crop for many decades. The driving force behind this interest is the movement to source food locally. In some cases, the movement has been aided by legislation. In New York for example, a special Farm Brewery License can be obtained for beers that are made from primarily locally sourced ingredients. The desire to source and process locally produced malting barley brings many opportunities as well as some challenges.

Barley is an excellent small grain in rotation with any number of crops. In addition to breaking disease cycles, barley's fine root structure helps condition soils and its early maturity allows for establishment of fall seeded crops or even double cropping in some regions. With relatively low inputs and added premiums, malting barley is a very attractive crop option.

Realizing the premium that quality malting barley garners requires careful selection of an adapted variety and appropriate disease management strategies. As malting barley begins to be grown in the eastern US, land grant universities have begun to include malting varieties in their small grain trials to see which lines are most likely to be suitable for their area. Some institutions have also started developing breeding programs to create varieties that are adapted to eastern growing conditions. The American Malting Barley Association, Inc. (AMBA) has begun to provide supplemental funding for the development of winter malting barley varieties at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University and with the USDA-Agricultural Research Service in Raleigh, North Carolina. AMBA also provides some support for variety trials in a number of different regions which help growers select the variety that has the best malting quality for their area.

The interest in local ingredients is not just in the east. Craft brewers have contracted malting barley in California, Michigan, Oregon Washington and other states, with one brewer building its own malt house. Established large malting companies are contracting barley to meet this growing local demand. New, small malting facilities have also begun contracting barley and producing malt in in Colorado, Illinois, Massachusetts, Nevada, New York, North Carolina, Oregon, and Texas. Each region has its own production challenges that come with the rewards of sourcing locally grown barley.