



# American Malting Barley Association, Inc.

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## **Press Release: 42<sup>ND</sup> Barley Improvement Conference Held**

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Albuquerque, NM – January 17, 2019 – A successful 42<sup>ND</sup> biennial Barley Improvement Conference was held in Albuquerque, NM, January 9-10, 2019. The conference has been hosted by the American Malting Barley Association (AMBA) and its predecessor organizations since the 1940s and brings together participants representing the whole malting barley supply chain including researchers, growers and end users. This year’s meeting was also sponsored by the Idaho Barley Commission, Minnesota Barley Research & Promotion Council, Montana Grain Growers Association, Montana Wheat & Barley Committee, National Barley Growers Association, North Dakota Barley Council, and Washington Grain Commission.



The meeting kicked off with a discussion session on strategies to shorten the time it takes to breed, evaluate, and release new public sector malting barley varieties that meet the needs of growers and end users. There has been a proliferation of brewers, distillers and maltsters in the US in recent years and many of them are outside our traditional barley producing states. While this provides opportunities for growers in these new areas, it creates challenges for researchers to develop lines that handle the environment stresses in these regions. The item that generated some of the most discussion was the movement of the malting barley industry completely out of six-row barley. “The switch to two-rowed malting barley has been going on for a number of years”, according to Dr. Michael Davis, AMBA President, “but the decision to no longer evaluate or support research on developing new six-row lines was just made last month.”

Ten speakers covered a broad range of topics on the conference’s second day. Breeding more cold tolerant winter barley or working it in to a double cropping system with soybeans got the day started. Resistance to disease, the needs of distillers, and identifying barley resistant to preharvest sprouting were some of the topics in the afternoon. The conference ended with a banquet and an entertaining presentation by Mr. Lester Jones, Chief Economist with the National Beer Wholesalers Association on the state of the brewing industry. The consensus of participants was that this biennial conference provides a valuable and unique networking opportunity for everyone in the malting barley supply chain.