



American Malting Barley Association, Inc.

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Press Release: A Focus on Malting Barley Markets

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Milwaukee, WI – May 3, 2018 – Barley remains an important feed grain, but recent years have seen a much higher portion of the crop going for malting. Coinciding with the rise of malting barley as the dominate use, has been an increase in the processes and products made from malt. A diverse number of malt products can be made from a single variety of barley through changes to the malting process, but many applications require the development of new varieties. The American Malting Barley Association (AMBA) provides funding for malting barley researchers across the country and communicates the needs of the different segments of the industry.

Barley malt is ubiquitous in the food industry. You can find malt or malt extract on the ingredients list of many crackers, breads and cereals. It's in our malted milk balls, malts, whiskeys, and of course our beer. Ale, stout, lager, honey, cherry, and even wheat beers contain malted barley. Malt for all of these products must meet color, flavor and other analytical specifications which are met through variety selection and malt processing.

The lighter styles of beer and bourbon whiskeys use varieties that have more protein and enzymes that break down carbohydrates and proteins to nutrients for the yeast during the fermentation process. Lower levels of protein and enzymes are desired in “all malt” beer and whiskey. AMBA members routinely discuss the appropriate quality characteristics for these different malt markets and provide targets to barley breeders.

“Our [Malting Barley Breeding Guidelines](#) not only present breeders with the ideal characteristics for each type of barley, but also with a level of interest in that particular market”, notes Scott Heisel, Vice President and Technical Director of AMBA. “Every effort is made to make these targets attainable given the growing conditions in different regions of the country and the capabilities of malt processors”. AMBA uses these guidelines, and comparisons to current popular varieties, to assess the malting quality of new lines that breeders have developed. Breeders also supply yield, disease resistance and other agronomic data that is taken into account in the evaluations. There is no point in releasing a new variety that does not work well for growers. Lines that show promise are advanced to commercial brewing and distilling evaluation. At its April 11, 2018 meeting, the AMBA Technical Committee identified seven barley lines that had sufficient malting quality to be advanced to commercial trials. The ultimate goal is addition to the [recommended list](#) of malting barley varieties.