

BREEDERS DIGEST

Crop, variety and seed news for agronomists

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Quenching a thirst for high-yielding barley

Greater market buoyancy and an industry that is fitter for the future offer added cheer for spring malting barley for 2008 – while high-yielding variety Quench offers an opportunity to take advantage of better prices per tonne.



PRICES for spring malting barley saw unprecedented levels during 2007.

In part, this was due to strong feed barley prices, but also a tight worldwide supply for malting quality barley – due to poor crops in many key production areas around the world.

But while domestic demand for malt for brewing has fallen slightly, the UK brewing industry remains a large consumer.

Additionally, malt exports are now at a regular and sustainable level, while distilling demand for malt is increasing – fuelled by increasing whisky consumption in places like India and China. Indeed, the additional distilling demand has drawn up malt from England.

At a global level, demand for malt has grown faster than malting plant capacity recently. For the future, there continues to be increased consumption of beer.

So, things look better than they have for a long time. To maximise the benefit of buoyant prices, however, growing varieties which not only produce the required quality, but also offer high yields, and which are accepted for UK use and export, makes increasing sense.

This is where NFC Tipple and newcomer variety Quench come into their own. Like NFC Tipple before it, Quench is being commercialised across Europe.

“Varieties which are accepted across Europe offer added stability to growers,” says Robert Hiles of Syngenta Seeds, “by maximising the number of end market opportunities. From harvest 2007, around 5,600 tonnes of Quench are being evaluated by seven different maltsters, which is a significant tonnage,” he adds.

NFC Tipple – established European variety

- The highest yielding (treated) malting barley on the HGCA Recommended List which has full IBD brewing approval
- Good on-farm record – taking more than a third of the English market in 2007
- Established with UK and overseas buyers

Quench – new pan European candidate

- The highest UK treated yield of all spring barley varieties on the HGCA Recommended List (malting or feed)
- Already has provisional 1 IBD approval for brewing – and attracting interest among UK and European end users
- Excellent Rhynchosporium resistance
- Seed rate: 325-350 per sq m for February drilling (favourable conditions)

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More high-yielders recommended



Arable farmers have three other high-yielding reasons for cheer during 2008 – with news that two further high-yielding NFC spring barley varieties have been added to the HGCA Recommended List, plus a high-yielding NFC winter wheat.

Jolika and Sweeney are both potential brewing spring barley varieties with UK treated yields of 104% and 106% respectively* on the HGCA Recommended List, 2008.

Jolika is potentially a very high quality variety. With its high hot water extract and other quality criteria, it could be particularly suited to growing for the export malt market.

Meanwhile, Sweeney is more of a conventional malting variety, similar to Quench in terms of malting quality and yield.

Both Jolika and Sweeney have good lodging and brackling resistance, and both are under test for IBD approval. Both are also low grain nitrogen producing varieties, which can make it easier for growers to meet certain malting specifications.

Robust wheat

In the winter wheat market, new variety Duxford combines high yields, stiff straw and good disease resistance – coupled with some gristing potential.

A nabim group 4 variety, with a UK treated yield of 106%*, it is the joint second highest yielding variety available on the latest HGCA

Recommended List, 2008, says Robert Hiles. It marks the return of Syngenta Seeds to the wheat market in the UK.

“With high yields, combined with good all-round disease resistance and very stiff straw, Duxford offers a very robust option for growers,” says Mr Hiles.

“From a disease resistance viewpoint, it offers a balanced profile – including a seven rating* against yellow rust and no scores less than a five* against other fungal diseases.

“It has also stood extremely well, with a maximum score of nine* for lodging resistance with a PGR, and has yielded well as both a first and second cereal. Indeed, for growers with second wheat, its yield could be very appealing.

“As well as being a feed variety, it also has some gristing potential for bread-making,” he adds.



Duxford – high yields plus very stiff straw

* Data from the HGCA Recommended Lists database, full database at www.hgca.com

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