

# BREEDERS DIGEST

Crop, variety and seed news for agronomists

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## Flagon gains provisional brewing approval

New high yielding winter barley Flagon has now received Provisional 2 approval for brewing by the Institute of Brewing. With this prestigious award in place, it's now poised to be a real malting contender on farm ...



Toasting success: Flagon's provisional IOB approval

NOT only the highest yielding winter malting barley on the HGCA Recommended List 2005/06, as of the beginning of June, Flagon is now also provisionally approved for brewing by the Institute of Brewing (IOB).

What's more, rather than gaining Provisional 1 approval, it moved straight to Provisional 2 status – thanks to the volume of macro scale brewing tests it has successfully passed.

"The market is ready for a new winter malting variety," says Robert Hiles, of New Farm Crops. "This latest accolade indicates that the variety has shown to date the levels of malting quality that end users require.

"With growers now deciding on varieties for next season, the combination of this provisional approval, together with the step forward in yield that Flagon offers, should give farmers even greater confidence to plant it this autumn."

According to Mr Hiles, Flagon was able to progress straight to Provisional 2 approval because, as well as passing all the tests for Provisional 1 listing, it had also passed many of those required for Full Approval.

"We are hopeful of Full approval next June, subject to further end user tests."

### Top treated yield

Also, at 102%, it offers growers the top treated yields for a two-row malting variety on the HGCA Recommended List 2005/06, four percentage points higher than Pearl. And it has attracted strong end market interest.

"Flagon is an inherently lower grain nitrogen producer," he adds, "which could make it easier for growers to meet end market requirements and therefore achieve a malting premium. Plus it has excellent disease resistance, making it a robust variety to grow."



### NFC Tipple too!

It's not only winter barley that's received IOB approval for brewing. High yielding spring barley NFC Tipple gains Provisional 1 approval on the new IOB list too.

With a massive treated yield of 109% on the HGCA Recommended List 2005/06 – the highest of any spring malting variety – it's an ideal variety to try.

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## Barley holds benefits – but specialise in malting or feed

INCLUDING winter barley in arable rotations this autumn could bring major benefits for growers – in both direct crop income and wider rotational gains.

But consider specialising in either malting or feed varieties rather than compromising on something in between, advises Robert Hiles of NFC.

With significant steps forward in yield provided by latest generation six-row feed varieties or new specialist malting variety Flagon, growing a lower yielding dual-purpose variety in the hope of achieving a malting premium may no longer be the most profitable option to take, he suggests.

### Key role

“As arable businesses take on extra land to counter low cereal prices, winter barley has a key role to play in rotations,” explains Mr Hiles.

“With its early harvest, it effectively spreads workloads during the key combining and drilling period, allowing land to be managed without necessarily increasing numbers of machinery or staff.”

However barley must still be a profitable crop to be attractive – which is why yield is so important, he adds.

### Malting versus feed

“My advice is to grow what you’re good at and do the sums of what makes you most money.

“If you know you can regularly make good money by achieving a malting premium, then concentrate on being a malting grower – and grow the highest yielding specialist malting variety that you can, and which the end market wants.

“However if you don’t regularly achieve a premium, then ask yourself: Would I be better off growing a high yielding feed variety instead?”

“With recent breeding developments, the yield difference between six-row hybrid variety Colossus for feed and malting variety Pearl can be as much as 12 to 13 percentage points nowadays. That could be worth £76 per hectare if you don’t get a malting premium and both crops sell for the same feed price.

“Be honest and consider: For the number of times I achieve a malting premium, is this yield difference a gamble I’m prepared to take?”

### Choosing varieties for yield .....

#### Professional malting barley grower?



#### Feed barley grower?



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