

BREEDERS DIGEST

Crop, variety and seed news for agronomists

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Later drilling options as cereals expand

Increased cereal planting, due to high grain prices and less set-aside, could see varieties which are suited to late drilling playing a useful role this season. Here's a timely reminder of some of the NFC varieties that could help.



New wheat variety Duxford – an ideal candidate for the later drilling slot

REMEMBER the potential of hybrid barley for later drilling if facing a bigger-than-normal planting bottleneck, says Syngenta Seeds product development manager, Simon Phillips.

According to Mr Phillips, hybrid barley can be drilled up until late October, if needed, provided seedbed conditions are suitable. Similarly, the new potential bread-making winter wheat variety, Duxford, is also ideally suited to later drilling, he adds.

"With talk of more cereals being planted this autumn, driven by higher grain prices and land coming out of set-aside, growers could face a bigger drilling workload than normal," explains Mr Phillips. "That, in turn, could mean drilling going on later – especially if extra time is needed to work down seedbeds after land was churned up during the wet harvest, or if growers want to let black-grass germinate in stale seedbeds.

"As a result, there could be a key need for varieties suited to later drilling.

"Hybrid barley is one such example because its hybrid vigour helps it establish quickly even in not-so-warm conditions.

"Similarly, the new potential bread-making wheat, Duxford, is suited to later drilling – from mid September onwards. This is due to its rapid early growth which helps it compensate for late planting by passing through growth stages quickly," he adds.

For barley growers, Mr Phillips says that as well as the extra vigour of hybrids aiding root development during later drilling, it also helps with more tillering. The two main new hybrids, Boost and Bronx, are both high tillering varieties, he notes.

While the optimum drilling date for both Boost and Bronx is mid September, they can generally be planted up until the end of October – in both England and Scotland. "The important thing is that hybrid barley should be drilled in a firm, moist seedbed. Optimum seed rate for Bronx is 200 - 230 seeds per square metre, while for Boost it is 250 seeds per square metre," he adds.



- ✓ Breadmaking candidate with good performance as first and second wheat, robust disease resistance and stiff straw

Drilling date

Suitable for mid-late drilling (mid September onwards)

Seed rate

Mid Sept-mid Oct:	220-275 seeds/m ²
Mid Oct onwards:	275-300 seeds/m ²



Maintaining malting barley quality in-store

Maintaining malting barley quality in-store will be crucial to protecting premiums over the coming months. But how should it be kept?



A thorough understanding of the exact specifications required by the end market is the starting point for successful grain storage management. It's important that you

speak to your maltster to find out their specific requirements, but maltsters typically require 13% moisture content (mc) to preserve a minimum germination level of 98%.

Correct drying and storage will, therefore, have a major impact on the premiums that your crop could achieve. Grain should be sampled accurately at harvest, and germination tested before storage (keep all records).

A wet harvest didn't give the best start for storing malting barley – with many crops over moisture this harvest – and grain should be dried to no more than 13% mc (it's important that moisture meters are calibrated correctly). Even after drying down, it's still essential to maintain optimum storage conditions to protect quality if you want to maintain a premium product.

The grain should be ventilated to allow it to cool to 10°C (check uniformity of cooling), and monitored regularly to ensure the temperature and moisture will maintain minimum germination levels of 98%. After drying, take samples from the bulk each week until grain temperature stabilises, then test new samples after three months' storage and/or prior to delivery to confirm quality. Take care not to damage the grain when sampling/handling as this can impair germination.

Maltsters have made the following statement for 2007 malting barley crop purchases: *'All cereals must be stored and managed in such a way as to minimise the risk of moulds that may produce mycotoxins. Grain should be below 14.5 per cent moisture and be dried in a way such that germination is not impaired. From November 1st grain above 14.5 per cent moisture may be accepted. This will be subject to individual maltsters' terms and conditions.'*

Source: www.ukmalt.com

The table below shows the importance of low moisture content and grain temperature for storing malting barley. It also shows the approximate safe storage time in days (in the absence of mites, fungi or insects).

Approximate safe storage times in days					
Temperature	25-30°C	20-25°C	15-20°C	10-15°C	<10°C
Moisture content (%)					
18-20	<2	<7	11	21	39
16-18	<10	14	35	70	>100
14-16	28	42	70	>100	>100
<14	70	>100	>100	>100	>100

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