

11th November 2010



Hindmarsh Falls Short of Malt Accreditation

Hindmarsh, a barley variety released in 2007 and now becoming increasingly popular in many regions of eastern Australia, has failed to meet the standards set by the Malting and Brewing Industry Barley Technical Committee (MBIBTC) for accreditation as a malting barley variety in its second and final year of evaluation. MBIBTC considers that, as Hindmarsh does not have the required malting quality characteristics to warrant it being granted accreditation, the committee will not be recommending to Barley Australia that it should be granted official malting barley variety status in Australia.

The MBIBTC decision follows the completion of recent tests which indicated that malt quality was regularly compromised by unacceptably high wort beta glucan and viscosity levels, which, during the brewing process, can result in difficulties in the separation of the wort from the mash and create problems with beer filtration.

The variety was admitted to the Barley Australia varietal accreditation program in 2008 and successfully progressed from stage one to stage two evaluation in 2009 on the recommendation of members of the MBIBTC. During deliberations at this time, the MBIBTC committee was aware that earlier small scale malting trials conducted prior to official admission into the Barley Australia varietal accreditation program did expose some of these quality problems, but they did not emerge in the first year of official evaluation on a limited commercial tonnage. Unfortunately, they re emerged this year, indicating a lack of consistency in the results obtained from year to year for this variety, which is also of significant concern to maltsters.

Normally, Barley Australia announces the results of malting barley evaluations in March each year, but given the significant increase in the plantings of this variety, and the high expectations riding on Hindmarsh in achieving malting status, the organization has decided to announce the MBIBTC decision not to recommend malting status for this variety immediately.

The Executive Manager of Barley Australia Mr Neil Barker said that the barley varietal accreditation program is extremely important to the industry, as it ensures that only those varieties which meet the required standards set by MBIBTC are granted official malting variety status. One of the primary conditions for accreditation is that any new varieties recognized as malt varieties must be superior to the varieties they are intended to replace. Australia's competitors operate similar accreditation systems for malting barley, and it is important that standards are maintained so that our reputation for the supply of high quality malting barley destined for malting and beer brewing markets can be maintained.

Mr Barker did point out however that under current marketing arrangements, there was no reason why grain companies could not market specially segregated varieties to any customer for any purpose if a demand existed for those varieties irrespective of their malting accreditation status. The main purpose of Barley Australia accreditation system is to ensure the supply of high quality, high value, accredited malting barley varieties to discriminating and quality conscious buyers which can compete with varieties supplied by our competitors.

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