

Australia launches new malt-potential conventional barley variety, Spinnaker

08 November 2024 | News

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A NEW malt-potential barley variety is being launched in Australia in spring, with seed crops currently being grown with Seednet Partners in Northern NSW, Central NSW, Southern NSW, Victoria, South Australia and Western Australia.

Spinnaker is a conventional spring-type barley. Spinnaker barley is not an Imi-tolerant variety, and its name is not associated with the crop chemical Spinnaker.

Being a conventional barley variety is a positive feature for Spinnaker because chemical residues are becoming an increasing issue for end-users, and there is less and less conventional barley being produced in Australia. Another end-user benefit with Spinnaker barley is its low requirement for the plant hormone Gibberellic Acid (GA) for malting.

GA is often used to assist germination in the malting process and although it is totally safe for human consumption, some brewers prefer less inputs to be used in the production of their beer.

In the paddock, Spinnaker is a quick-maturing, high-yielding barley variety broadly adapted to medium and low-rainfall barley-growing regions. It has excellent physical grain quality with high retention, high test weight and low screenings. In terms of plant type, Spinnaker has the same good vigour and competitive nature as RGT Planet, but Spinnaker is earlier to heading and shorter at maturity.

Its disease resistance profile is very similar to RGT Planet with Resistance to Powdery mildew and Moderate Resistance/Moderate Susceptibility to Barley Yellow Dwarf Virus and Black point, but it is rated Moderately Susceptible to Susceptible for Leaf rust and Moderately Susceptible to Susceptible/Very Susceptible for Net blotches.

The breeding process for Spinnaker involved a complex three-way cross combining hardy Australian adaptation and physical grain size with European malt quality. Its pedigree includes the commercial varieties Fathom and RGT Planet, plus a high malt-quality SECOBRA breeding line. As its pedigree suggests, Spinnaker has been bred for malting and brewing and is currently in Stage 1 of evaluation.

There are three malting and brewing evaluation crops in production across South East Australia this year that are planned to be malted by Malteurop in Victoria and Coopers in South Australia next year. Breeder analysis to date has found that Spinnaker has very good malt attributes and a high probability of achieving malt quality when it becomes accredited.