



Press Release: January 9, 2012

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Changes to AMBA's Recommended Malting Varieties for 2012

The American Malting Barley Association, Inc. (AMBA), a nonprofit trade association of major US malting and brewing companies, has announced recommended malting barley varieties for the 2012 growing season. Rasmusson, a six-row variety, has been dropped from last year's list. While no new varieties have been added to the list of recommended varieties, AMBA continues an aggressive development and testing program aimed at the release of new varieties with superior agronomics and quality.

The recommended two-rowed varieties for 2012 are *AC Metcalfe*, *CDC Copeland*, *Charles*, *Conlon*, *Conrad*, *Harrington*, *Hockett*, *Merit*, *Merit 57*, *Moravian 37*, *Moravian 69*, *Pinnacle*, and *Scarlett*. Six-rowed varieties are *Celebration*, *Lacey*, *Legacy*, *Quest*, *Robust*, *Stellar-ND*, and *Tradition*. Malting barley growers are encouraged to contact their local elevator, grain handler or processor to gauge market demand for varieties grown in their region prior to seeding. The development of malting barley varieties in the US is the result of efforts by both public and private breeding programs. Public programs are located at both state and federal institutions.

AMBA funds research for the development of all barley categories with funding directed, in order of priority, to Midwest spring six-rows, western spring two-rows, and winter types. Continuing development efforts of all these types of barley are important to maintaining a healthy community for growers and the malting and brewing industry.

In the early stages of developing a new variety, breeders begin testing their experimental lines for agronomic characteristics, such as yield and disease resistance. Later on, malting quality tests are conducted on lines in pilot scale programs. In the later stages of development, lines undergo commercial malting and brewing trials. If these trials are successful, malting varieties are released and added to the AMBA recommended list.