

Media Release

Chiefs of Staff, News Directors

Friday 17 October, 2014

Researchers discover new malt barley variety

University of Tasmania researchers have discovered a new variety of malt barley in Tasmania which has the potential to be exported internationally for use in boutique beers and whiskeys.

Researchers from the Tasmanian Institute of Agriculture (TIA) discovered the new variety, Macquarie Barley, through a breeding program funded by the Grains Research and Development Corporation (GRDC).

TIA Cereal Breeder Associate Professor Meixue Zhou identified the new crop which is named after the river in the State's Midlands.

Tasmanian farmers will host the first trials. If they are successful the product would be expanded to overseas markets.

Assoc Prof Zhou said Macquarie Barley was a suitable replacement to other types of malt barley (including Gairdner and Franklin) due to its malting quality, improved disease resistance and yield.

"Hopefully this variety will be another viable cereal option for growers," he said.

TAP AgriCo (TAP), Tasmania's largest cereal grain storage and handling company, has recently secured a licence to the variety which is to be grown exclusively by local farmers.

"The craft brewing industry is expanding globally," TAP's Managing Director David Skipper said.

"It is estimated that the Australian craft beer market sits between 65-70 million litres or around three per cent by volume of the total Australian beer market.

"The US craft brewing industry is increasing at 15 per cent per annum year on year and this trend is now emerging in Australia.

"TAP's market feedback suggests that the local whiskey industry is keen to use a 100 per cent Tasmanian provided malt barley in their distilleries, saying that it will be the first time a uniquely local product will be trialed in what is already a world class whiskey and craft brewing industry."

University of Tasmania's Director of Business Development and Technology Transfer, Dr Darren Cundy, said the partnership was a great example of the University's on-going commitment to transfer research outcomes to local industry.

"It is a testament to the importance of the relationship that TIA and TAP have worked hard to maintain," he said.

"We are excited to support TAP on this trial, and look forward to seeing a strong market demand for the variety."

About Tasmanian Agricultural Producers (TAP)

Tasmanian Agricultural Producers Pty Ltd, trading as TAP AgriCo, was established in 2006 to initially export agricultural produce directly from Tasmania. TAP provides avenues for all Tasmanian grain producers to collectively and intelligently market their agricultural produce into the domestic and international market arenas.

In 2010, TAP commenced the management of a domestic cereal grain pool in Tasmania after the purchase of the Powranna storage centre from Tasmanian Grain Elevators (TGE). In the last 12 months, TAP has pooled, marketed and traded (both mainland and Tasmanian product) in excess of 30,000MT of grain commodities, into the stock feed, malt barley and export canola markets.

TAP has also successfully secured significant canola contracts with two of Japan's largest consumer co-operatives to supply GMO free Tasmanian Canola for their domestic cooking oil. TAP also have contract supply agreements with various large Tasmanian end users of stockfeed for cereals, pulses and stock feed mixes.

About the University of Tasmania

The University of Tasmania is ranked in the top 10 research universities in Australia and in the top two per cent of universities in the world. For 125 years, the University has offered a creative and stimulating environment, providing opportunities for students to engage in an international learning experience. In addition to its student cohort, the University's community is strengthened by a network of more than 90,000 alumni spanning more than 120 countries, and is underpinned by collaborative partnerships with organisations that share its strategic outlook. While maintaining a distinctive Tasmanian identity, University programs and research are international in scope, vision and standards.

About TIA

The Tasmanian Institute of Agriculture is a joint venture between the University of Tasmania and the Tasmanian Government.

TIA is a dynamic team of 130 scientists, educators and technical experts with access to world-class facilities and equipment, who conduct high-quality research, development, extension, education and training to meet the needs of the agricultural and food systems sectors.

TIA has strong links to key stakeholders in industry, policy, education and the wider community – particularly young people – and to agricultural research institutions around the world. TIA conducts world-class research, which is published and transformed into tools, information and training courses used by farmers, agribusiness leaders and policy advisors to understand and manage emerging industry challenges.

For interviews, contact David Skipper (Managing Director of TAP AgriCo) on (03) 6398 6122 or Dr Darren Cundy (Director of Business Development & Technology Transfer, University of Tasmania) on (03) 6226 7286.

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