

IDAHO BARLEY NEWSBRIEF

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Idaho Barley Check-Off Dollars at Work... IBC concludes effort to post 2009 malt bar- ley contract prices

IBC has wrapped up a six-month project initiated by new eastern ID commissioner Dwight Little, Teton, to educate eastern Idaho growers on 2009 malting barley contract price offers. Last October, the IBC began posting malting contract price offers at several eastern Idaho locations (Ashton, St. Anthony, Teton, Rexburg, Lewisville, Mud Lake, Idaho Falls). Prices were updated every Wednesday and Friday. Based on positive producer feedback, the IBC will likely repeat this grower education effort next fall/winter.

Fine-tuning 2009 production costs

Although some input costs have fallen from last year's record high levels, costs remain historically high. Grain prices, on the other hand, have fallen as much as 30% from last year's levels, putting added pressure on producers to fine-tune their crop management strategies.

Three years ago, the IBC coordinated an effort with a group of University of Idaho extension specialists and county faculty to develop a list of **Idaho Grain Best Management Practices**. This effort resulted in an excellent UI extension publication, CIS 1127 "Saving Energy and Fertilizer Costs: Best Management Practices for Southern Idaho Grain Producers," which is available online at the IBC website at www.idahobarley.org or the UI website at www.uidaho.edu/

Key Points:

Reducing seeding rates. Recommended seeding rates for irrigated spring barley can be as high as 120 pounds per acre. Most barley varieties compensate well at lower seeding rates by increasing the number of tillers produced per plant. In research done at Aberdeen, there were little to no differences in yields of barley planted at 60 pounds per acre and at 120 pounds per acre when seeded at optimal planting dates. Malting company fieldmen recommend establishing a plant stand of 750,000 plants per acre to optimize both yield and grain quality. Depending on the 1,000-kernel weight and germination percentage of the variety, this may equate to 70 to 80 pounds of seed per acre. Dryland barley could also be planted at reduced seeding rates.

Optimizing seeding depth. Producers can achieve more uniform emergence and improved yields if they take more care in setting their drills and working the seedbed. The optimum seeding depth is 1 - 1 1/2 inches, not the typical 1 1/2 - 2 inch depth commonly used across the state.

Minimizing tillage operations. You lose about an inch of moisture by moldboard plow and 1/2 inch for every additional tillage pass.

Monitoring fertilizer applications. Too much N usually means too high of protein in malting barley. Take soil tests to calculate your available nitrogen (carryover + applied). Consider using cheaper nitrogen sources.

Managing weeds. Determine the weed species and density in each field before deciding which herbicide(s) is needed for weed control. Using the same herbicide combination may not be necessary for all grain fields. It be also be possible to use less expensive herbicides or generic forms. Use the recommended label rates and make sure your sprayer is calibrated accurately. Using reduced rates may save money in the short run but may also lead to bigger weed problems in the long term.

Policy Watch -

Federal budget blueprints reject Obama's ag cuts -

The House and Senate voted on their respective FY 2010 budgets in early April, both rejecting proposals from the Obama Administration calling for a 3-year phase out of direct payments for producers with gross sales above \$500,000 and a hard payment cap of \$250,000.

Rail Legislation -

Rail competition legislation

is expected to be introduced in Congress this spring that will include many of the provisions widely supported by captive shippers. **Final offer arbitration** - a key provision supported by ag shippers in past bills - is expected to cover other sectors as well as ag in the new bill.

Railroad Antitrust Enforcement Act of 2009 (S. 146)

is now winding its way through the U.S. Senate. It passed the Senate Judiciary Cmte on a 14-0 vote in mid March. A companion bill is awaiting mark-up in the House Judiciary Cmte. This legislation will eliminate antitrust exemptions for railroads.

Market Buzz... Barley fiber now found in all natural fruit juice from Bolthouse Farms

Barley is not just in soup anymore...Bolthouse Farms® has introduced a new innovative all natural fruit juice - **Heart Healthy Pear Merlot** - made with Barliv™ barley betafiber, a natural soluble fiber extracted from barley.

"We are excited to offer this great tasting new product to consumers who are managing their heart health," said Clay Gruenstein, brand manager, Bolthouse Farms®. "Many heart-healthy ingredients were evaluated, and Barliv™ barley betafiber was chosen because of its great fit with our product portfolio – it is 100-percent natural, clinically proven to work and it's completely 'invisible' in our products."



Barliv™ barley betafiber is a natural soluble fiber developed by Cargill that is made from barley and is now backed by an FDA health claim*. In addition, clinical studies with Barliv™ barley betafiber have shown that consuming just 3 grams per day as part of a diet low in saturated fat and cholesterol may help reduce LDL (bad) cholesterol by as much as 9.5 percent without reducing HDL (good) cholesterol. Each serving of Bolthouse Farms' Heart Healthy Pear Merlot fruit juice blend contains 0.75 grams of Barliv™ barley betafiber.

Bolthouse Farms is a fourth generation farm located in California's fertile San Joaquin Valley known for its fresh produce, 100-percent natural juices. Bolthouse Farms' Heart Healthy Pear Merlot fruit juice is available in the fresh produce section of many local grocery stores.

***FDA's Authorized Health Claim** - Diets low in saturated fat and cholesterol that include 3 grams per day of beta-glucan soluble fiber from barley betafiber may reduce the risk of heart disease.

Fine-tuning 2009 production costs, continued

Optimizing irrigation. Be cautious with the first irrigation, but don't scrimp on water in the early season. A barley crop needs a good 6-7 inches of moisture (soil stored and applied) to satisfy vegetative growth needs. However, more nitrogen can be lost from the rooting zone by leaching in the first irrigation than with any subsequent application, especially if the field was plowed. In these early irrigations, avoid wetting soils to depths below the existing root system. Limiting the first irrigation to about 0.5 inch on coarse-textured sandy soils is a good practice. Don't over irrigate at the end of the season. Unneeded irrigations consumer energy, waste water, increase lodging and inflate production costs. If the soil is moist at the soft dough stage, then no additional irrigation should be necessary unless on very sandy soils.

IGPA growers meet with ID Congressman Mike Simpson

Twin Falls County area grain farmers joined with the IGPA on April 9, 2009 in Twin Falls to co-host a meeting with U.S. Congressman Mike Simpson of Idaho's 2nd congressional district.

The meeting covered a wide range of topics of concern by the area's producers including renewable energy, climate change, inheritance taxation, the federal earmark process, dam removal and a pilot program on Idaho inter-states for 129,000 lb. trucks.



The IGPA will work with Rep. Simpson and his staff to schedule further discussion with eastern Idaho farmers later this year.

Efforts are underway to raise the ethanol blend from 10% to 15%

Growth Energy, a new coalition formed to promote the development of American renewable fuels, has formally petitioned the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for a waiver for the use of gasoline blended with 15% ethanol (E15), up from the currently approved E10 blend. This request sets in motion a 270-day timetable for EPA to rule on whether or not E15 is a safe fuel blend for vehicles.

For the past several months, EPA has been internally evaluating the possibility of raising the ethanol blend from 10% to 12-15% at the urging of corn growers and the U.S. ethanol industry. Word came last week that EPA had decided to further study the potential effects on vehicle engines. This waiver request, however, requires EPA to officially rule on E15 in a specific time-frame.

Growth Energy claims there are numerous studies that have found higher ethanol blends do not have an adverse effect on vehicle wear or tailpipe emissions. An E15 blend requirement is expected to increase ethanol demand by 50% in the future. The current Renewable Fuels Standard mandates 15 billion gallons of ethanol production by 2015, but at the current blending limit of 10%, the demand will remain well below the RFS production mandate.

Current U.S. ethanol production has been pegged at 13.7 billion gallons per year, with nearly 2 billion of that off-line due to poor ethanol margins. More than 3.7 billion bushels of U.S. corn are expected to be processed into ethanol in the current marketing year, up 75% from two years ago.