

# Idaho Leaps into Top Barley Producing Spot

## Celebrating 30 Years of Service to Idaho Barley Producers

By: Kelly Olson, Retiring IBC Administrator, Served 1994-2018

### **34%** Idaho's share of 2018 US Barley Crop

2018 barley crop is projected at 53 million bushels (up 9% from 2017). Average yields are estimated at 106 bu per acre (up 8%).

### Domestic beer sales are slowing...

- 2017 US beer sales volume was down 1.2%, while hard liquor sales were up 2.6%.
- Craft beer sales grew 5%, down from 6.2% the year before, and followed several years of double-digit growth.
- Beer makers who buy Idaho barley see opportunities to turn these negative trends around.

Idaho barley growers fully fund **ONE MILLION DOLLAR** University of Idaho Research Endowment in October 2017.

The IBC Board voted in June 2018 to modestly expand the endowed agonomic research program at \$70,500 each of the next five years, for a total of \$352,500.

Dr. Chris Rogers assumed barley scientist position at the Aberdeen Research & Extension Center in July 2014.



### Food barley production expands 7x since 2016

- Strong Japanese demand boosts contract acreage across Idaho.
- IBC is leading launch of major new food barley campaign targeting school meals, restaurants and food bloggers.



Japanese food barley team visits Jerome area farm to inspect 2018 food barley crop. Team was hosted by the IBC and five PNW grain companies now contracting food barley in Idaho and the PNW

# Anheuser Busch Celebrates 50-year Partnership with Idaho Barley Growers

Barley gives beer its soul, a central theme celebrated by the Anheuser-Busch InBev Company and their barley growers at a biennial Barley Grower Appreciation barbeque held July 13 in Idaho Falls.

At this year's event, the ABI procurement team recognized more than a dozen young barley growers who are the second or third generation producers growing barley for ABI in eastern and south-central Idaho. They also presented SmartBarley Sustainability and Innovations Awards to Timm and Luke Adams in Rupert and Pat Purdy in Picabo.

"We recognize and appreciate how important these young farmers are to the future of barley production in Idaho and to agriculture as a whole," said Doug Peck, Idaho regional manager. "Idaho farmers play a large role in the production of good, high quality malting barley for Anheuser Busch and we look forward to working with these young men and women far into the future. We thank them for the decisions that they have made to continue a life of farming. We also wanted to recognize growers with a SmartBarley Sustainability and Innovations Award for their efforts beyond the everyday practices of farming by implementing variable rate fertilizer application, cover crops, rotational grazing, LESA irrigation and other practices of conservation and sustainability." This year's celebration also focused on Anheuser-Busch U.S. 2025 Sustainability Goals that are a key part of their SmartBarley program that was launched in 2013. ABI officials note that creating shared value between the brewer and its thousands of barley grower partners to sustainably grow the best barley for the highest-



quality beer is a company-wide effort. AB is strongly committed to ensuring 100 percent of its direct farmers will be skilled, connected and financially empowered within the next eight years.

Anheuser-Busch's Smart Agriculture targets the first step in the beer-making process - growing and harvesting barley and hops - while the three additional goals focus on carbon reduction, circular packaging and water stewardship. Our goal is to have 100 percent of our facilities, including the farms where barley is grown, engaged in water efficiency efforts by 2025. In the past decade, Anheuser-Busch reduced water usage by nearly 38 percent; however, the new goals will aim higher to reduce water usage by another 9 percent.

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“As a truly global brewer, we rely on a healthy natural environment and thriving communities in order to brew beers that will continue to bring people together into the future,” said Ingrid De Ryck, vice president, Procurement & Sustainability for Anheuser-Busch. “These ambitious new goals require participation and marked improvement across every piece of our business, from the wholesalers and brewers, to the growers nurturing our barley from the ground up.”

As the center of any great beer, barley serves not only as the starting point for creating a high-quality beer, but also the initial touchpoint for improved sustainability efforts. Anheuser-Busch will use its upcoming Grower Days event to share best practices and educate growers on its global sustainability goals and Smart Agriculture programs such as:

- SmartBarley, which helps growers produce the most “crop per drop” of water through benchmarking.
- LESA, a pivot irrigation technology that waters closer to the ground to save up to 20 percent of the water and energy required to irrigate.

- AgriMet, an irrigation scheduler that gives growers real-time access to weather and water data.
- New Barley Varieties, see the latest improved varieties from Anheuser-Busch’s barley breeding team.
- Crop Management Trials, which provide key management information about proprietary barley varieties, including seeding rate, fertilizer rate, growth regulators, and more.

“At Anheuser-Busch, we have a saying, ‘barley today, Budweiser tomorrow,’ which rings true, as barley is one of the four key ingredients critical in making high-quality beer,” said John Drake, director of Western Malting Operations for Anheuser-Busch. “It gives beer its beautiful range of colors, its sweetness, alcohol component, unmistakable aroma and ultimately, the flavor we all know and love. It is because of this that we have made a promise to continue to work hand-in-hand with U.S. barley growers to innovate, drive barley research and lead the way in sustainable barley growing practices.” ■





## Idaho Barley People in the News...



Mike Wilkins, Rupert, was appointed by Governor C.L. "Butch" Otter to serve a three-year term as South-Central Idaho barley commissioner, effective July 1, 2018. Mr. Wilkins is a third generation barley producer in Minidoka County, where he farms barley, sugar beets and alfalfa with his son.

Wilkins has been a long-time leader in Magic Valley water issues, serving on the Minidoka Irrigation District Board and Committee of Nine when the historic water agreement was crafted between surface and groundwater users on the Snake River Plain Aquifer.



IBC board present the Idaho Barley Industry Service Award to Pat Purdy at his retirement dinner on June 21 in Picabo, ID. Left to right: IBC Industry Representative Tim Pella, Anheuser Busch; Chairman Wes Hubbard, grower from Bonners Ferry; Pat Purdy, grower from Picabo; and Scott Brown, grower from Soda Springs.



Retired USDA ARS barley breeder Darrell Wesenberg passed away on July 30. Darrell was the former Research Leader and barley breeder at the USDA ARS Small Grains and Potato Germplasm Research Facility in Aberdeen, ID. Darrell retired from ARS in 2001 after 33 years of service, and has spent many long

summer days with his family, friends, and boats at his Lake Kabetogama MN cabin. A native of Wisconsin, he received his higher education at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, including his Ph.D. in Agronomy in 1968. That year he began work as a plant breeder with ARS in Aberdeen.

Darrell developed many barley and oat cultivars that greatly benefited growers and industry nationwide. Notable was the release of the barley cultivar 'Klages', which spurred the growth of the malting industry in the western states. Darrell's years-long effort to introduce malting quality traits into winter barley culminated in the release of North America's first winter malting barley 'Charles' and opened new opportunities for efficient barley production. Dr. Wesenberg's pioneering work with the National Small Grains Collection housed at the Aberdeen research center expanded the evaluation of barley and oat germplasm to include screening for emerging disease problems and assessment of important grain quality characteristics. He received the Distinguished Service to Oat Improvement Award in 1998, the Idaho Barley Industry Service Award in 2000, and was inducted into the Eastern Idaho Agriculture Hall of Fame in 2007. Dr. Darrell Wesenberg is survived by his three daughters and two grandchildren. ■