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CMBTC Releases 2016-17 Recommended Malting Barley Varieties List

WINNIPEG – The Canadian Malting Barley Technical Centre (CMBTC) has released its recommended malting barley varieties for 2016-17. The list represents varieties that the CMBTC recommends based on a combination of factors including quality performance and commercial demand.

“With this list we provide signals to growers about which varieties we believe have the greatest potential to be selected. We also recommend growers talk to their local elevators, or selectors from grain and malting companies, about the best two-row and six-row malting barley varieties to grow in their area” said Peter Watts, Managing Director of the CMBTC.

The recommended list is published on behalf of members of the CMBTC with input provided by grain companies, domestic and international maltsters and brewers, and other affiliated organizations including the Brewing and Malting Barley Research Institute (BMBRI). “We consult broadly with the industry gauging the level of interest for specific varieties to have a good understanding of marketing opportunities” said Watts.

Canada is one of the world’s largest suppliers of malting barley and malt to the global brewing industry. Malting barley seeded acres were up 11.5% in 2015 compared with the previous year and accounted for 54% of total seeded barley area compared with 52% in 2014, according to data collected by the Canadian Grain Commission, as strong prices in early 2015 encouraged planting.

The malting barley, malt and brewing industries contribute significantly to the Canadian economy. Using Statistics Canada data, the CMBTC estimates Canada exported 1.1 million tonnes of malting barley worth CDN \$381 million, and 600,000 tonnes of malt worth CDN \$418 million in 2014-15 (July/June).

Domestically Canadian brewers use about 230,000 tonnes of malt per year to make 18.5 million hectoliters of beer. While total beer consumption in Canada declined by 3.4% in the past 5 years, the number of breweries has risen 70% over the same period to 520 in 2014 according to Beer Canada.

Despite a small decline in 2014, global beer production has been rising steadily, driven by increased output in Asia, Africa and Latin America, and is on track to surpass two billion hectoliters by 2016. Coupled with more intensive malt usage in the craft brewing sector, demand for malting barley and malt is growing around the world creating greater market opportunities for the Canadian industry.

The CMBTC and its members strongly recommend use of certified seed to ensure varietal purity and increase opportunity for selection.

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The CMBTC is an independent, non-profit organization funded by members of the malting barley, malt and brewing industries to conduct applied malting and brewing research and provide technical support to members and customers. CMBTC facilities include a state-of-the-art pilot malting plant and pilot brewery located in the Canadian Grain Commission building in Winnipeg.

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