

The Camrose Booster (Camrose, AB)			Order/Commande 150162
Date 05.04.2011	Circ. 12775	Page B30	1 / 1

Barley growers offer malt lessons

From the Mar. 21 *Agri-News*

The Elite Barley program, which honours top producers of malt barley in Canada, offers an interesting window into the best management techniques of these elite growers. It also provides an inside view on how they managed to produce malt in a tough weather year on Canada's prairies in 2010.

The goal of the Elite Barley, Canadian Malting Barley Grower Recognition program is to promote grower best management practices for malting barley, and showcase the value that malt and malt barley bring to Western Canadian agriculture and the Canadian economy.

Michael Edney, of the Canadian Grain Commission, co-chair of the Elite Barley program, says several management techniques emerged from the information collected from these producers during the nomination process: the majority of producers used certified seed which they indi-

cated helps reduce disease pressures; planning is important and this usually includes soils tests; field selection for malt barley planting is high priority with these growers, canola stubble being the preferred choice (cereal stubble is never considered an option); they seed their malting barley as early as possible; most growers show a willingness to consider new varieties, demonstrating producer commitment to producing a quality product.

When it comes to harvest, straight cutting is preferred, but the decision typically depends on weather and uneven maturity problems. When swathing is required, growers tend to leave barley standing as long as possible and only swath when the window available to allow combining is within a few days. The goal is fewer than four days.

Most growers use production contracts as a method to know more precisely the specifications required, and to guarantee a

market when specifications are met.

"Sampling was one of the most important aspects of producing malt barley in the tough year of 2010," says Edney. "The sample must represent the barley in the bin. Storage with aeration is essential for malting barley. Using small bins allows segregation of varying quality."

A short article on each of the top 10 growers for 2010, along with other information on the program is available in an Elite Barley Special Report available at www.elitebarley.com.

The Elite Barley, Canadian Malting Barley Grower Recognition Program, enjoys support from a number of key sponsors. They include: The Alberta Barley Commission, BASF, Brewers Association of Canada, Brewing and Malting Barley Research Institute, Canadian Wheat Board, Prairie Malt, SeCan, Seed-Ex Inc., Syngenta and Rahr Malting Canada Ltd.

