

Elite Barley: Canadian Malt Barley Grower Recognition Program

The Canadian malting barley industry announced the 2010-11 malting barley growers selected for recognition under its malting barley grower recognition program on March 1, 2011. That program, now called "Elite Barley," honors the best malt barley producers in Canada. Ten growers have been selected by the industry as nominees for the 2010 production year.

"The goal of the Elite Barley program is to celebrate and promote the best management techniques in malt barley production," says program spokesperson, Michael Brophy, president and CEO of the Brewing and Malting Barley Research Institute (BMBRI). "In addition, it showcases the value of malt and malt barley production to Western agriculture and the general Canadian economy.

"Canadian malt is recognized around the world for its quality in producing beer and spirits. It represented a value of about \$740 million in farm gate receipts in 2009, and a

significantly greater value when brewing and malting activity is considered. Much of that success depends on the growers who are at the front end of the production process."

Elite Barley is a natural fit, says Mike Leslie, CEO of the Alberta Barley Commission, one of the founders and a current program sponsor. "We want to celebrate the best growers and all that this program stands for, and Elite Barley is a clear representation of that."

The growers nominated for 2010 are: Roger Begrand, St. Louis, Sask.; Ryan and Lauren Maurer, Grenfell, Sask.; Hewson Farm Corp, Langbank, Sask.; Bob Copeland, Rosetown, Sask.; Jeffery Wheaton, Biggar, Sask.; Ironwheel Farms Inc., Shaunavon, Sask.; Howard Linnell, Hafford, Sask.; Bork Farm, Chipman, Alta.; Verdant Hutterite Colony, Drumheller, Alta.; and the Sunshine Hutterite Brethren, Hussar, Alta.

Nominators include: BARI Canada Inc.; Richardson Pioneer; Viterra; Rahr Malting Canada Ltd.; and Prairie Malt Limited.

Malting barley is a high value crop that requires growers to follow precise agronomic practices and exacting storage standards, says Brophy. Brewers and maltsters look for different qualities and specifications in malting barley and want business relationships with farmers who can meet their particular requirements. The growers nominated by industry through this program are consistently the very best in the business.

As well as providing profile for the industry, the knowledge gained from the production and management practices of these Elite Barley producers is valuable to share with all growers, says Leslie. Background information on the Elite Barley program, production tips from these producers and other resource information is available in an Elite Barley Special Report available at www.elitebarley.com.

