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FARMERS CAN'T WIN

Rising beer prices are not going to make farmers rich. Your articles "Beer prices threaten to foam over" and "Beer pressure," (March 7 and 9) were hard to read because they don't show the small amount of malt barley that goes into a bottle of beer. However, once you take into account the 51% tax on beer, plus production costs like advertising, transportation and packaging, the return to barley growers works out to less than one cent a bottle. It's a supply and demand system and the unfortunate part for farmers is in years like this, price goes up when there is little to sell. The opposite is also true: When farmers have a lot to sell, the price drops. Yet when malt barley prices went down in 2010, you didn't see beer prices going down.

MATT SAWYER, Chair,
Alberta Barley Commission
(It's enough to drive a farmer to drink.)

