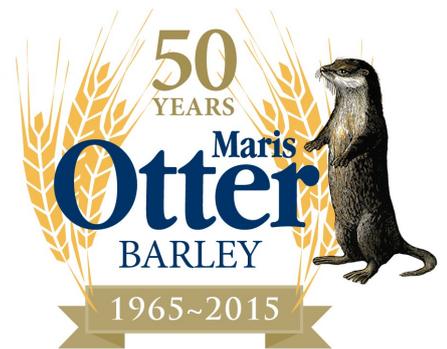




Maris Otter's Golden Jubilee



To all growers of Maris Otter barley

This year marks a fairly unique event in the arable farming sector with Maris Otter celebrating its 50th year since it was first listed, quite a remarkable achievement in this day and age of breeders constantly striving to produce varieties that give bigger yields and better agronomics. As you will probably be aware Maris Otter was bred for its brewing and flavour attributes and that is why it has stood the test of time like no other variety.

Please find herewith a Press Pack that was sent widely around the brewing and food industry and has certainly caught the imagination. There will be events throughout the year so we look forward to seeing you at some of them and keeping you updated.

Great British Barley Competition (GBBC)

We are running this unique competition to celebrate Otter's Golden Jubilee which is open to all growers of Maris Otter, it will be great fun and will bring together all parts of the industry. Please read through and complete the Entry Form in detail and we will look forward to receiving them and arranging judging which will take place in June/July. This competition will be a great way to celebrate the varieties 50th harvest. Francesca, Richard & Andrew will also be coming to see you to complete the forms, we cannot get around all growers so please find a form herewith to complete, if you need any help please let me know.

Soil Nitrogen

With base prices falling it is imperative that you hit the target with your Otter this harvest. With the mild winter so far there is a school of thought that soil residual nitrogens could be higher than usual. We would therefore recommend that you carry out a soil nitrogen test to a minimum of 60cm. We will again be using NIAB TAG to do all the tests, they take all the samples and have an extensive database to put together recommendations, they are starting this week and results will be back later this month/early March.

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Without wishing to state the obvious we would urge you to follow the basic guidelines by applying around 40kg/ha when the weather warms up and the crop starts to grow again, and then the final application tailored to your recommendation and subject to weather conditions between the first application and second and to what the forward forecast may predict (i.e. dry weather).

Movement

As with most crops this year we are running a month or two behind on delivering Otter into maltsters from both farm and central stores. We hope to have the majority delivered by the end of March but will keep you posted, thank you for your patience on this.

The Market

Consumption of craft beer continues to grow around the globe with the use of craft malt expanding with it. Interestingly Glenmorangie have just released a limited edition whisky which is distilled from Maris Otter malt and extols the virtues of the variety, it is worth looking on their website.

We now have approaching 1500 brewers in the UK and they are springing up all the time, in the States they are opening at the rate of 100's a year with over 2,000 in the planning phase. The thirst for craft beer is gaining momentum around the globe and we are putting a lot of time and effort in publicising the Maris Otter brand and the fact it is 50 years old and only grown here in Great Britain, the Union Jack factor plays a big role in demand for the product.

Tank Mixes

We are not keen to delve into the world of agronomy as your agronomists are better armed and are far more technically attuned than we are. However it is worth mentioning that we are seeing adverse reactions to both yields and quality when heavy tank mixes are used and late growth regulators such as Moddus & Cerone are applied. We would advise you to try and cut down on 'hot' tank mixes and to also be very wary about using late PGR's - many growers are not using any PGR at all now.

Moisture Content

There is concern behind the scenes with regard to moisture content in malting barley, the upshot is that it is imperative that you get your barley dried down to and stabilised below 14.5% moisture. It is not so critical for those that move at harvest to meet these levels, but those who are storing it need to keep a close eye on moisture in store - if it is over, then please let us know.

Finally

There is a lot going on as usual with malting barley and in particular Maris Otter and we are working to raise the profile of the variety and the supply chain that makes it all possible. If you have any local press contacts or local breweries it is worth approaching them to discuss some "field to pint" type initiatives, any help you need on this please do let me know.

Likewise if you have any other queries please do contact your RA Ltd buyer or myself here in Waltham Chase.

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