

Tuesday, 12th July 2016



BLUE ALEURONE LAYER BARLEY

At present, Australian barley receival standards dictate that only barleys with a white aleurone layer are acceptable.

Whilst this standard has been in place for many years, there are now some new and emerging barley varieties that may show a “blue” aleurone layer, which can be difficult to detect. It can vary by variety and by season from non-detectable through a light grey-blue to a more dark blue appearance.

Whilst worldwide scientific and end product studies have long demonstrated that this ‘blue’ characteristic has no impact on end-uses of feed barley or in malted barley for beer, they have however, had an impact on some buyers’ perception.

Barley Australia recognises that new Australian barley variety research should consider breeding and agronomic trials on blue aleurone genetic material. This material is usually sourced from Europe, and there may be advantages in using this material to improve the overall barley gene pool stock for the Australian industry, which may improve the development of better barleys for Australia and Australian conditions.

In the end, it will be the marketplace that will decide the acceptability of such barleys, as the ‘premium’ that white aleurone barley may have provided to Australian growers in the past could erode with competition from European sellers where it is understood that ‘blue’ aleurone barleys are accepted in certain markets.

Barley Australia will continue to support the current Grain Trade Australia (GTA) and Grain Industry of Western Australia (GIWA) standards on barley aleurone colour. At the same time, it will seek a study of both domestic and export markets from the bulk handlers, the trading companies and the customers to determine the impact of barleys that may be bred from blue aleurone varieties and adapted for Australian conditions.

In this regard, it will approach AEGIC who undertook the original market study to assist in determining the position of the barley industry stakeholders. If it were then considered that there would be no impact on current markets, Barley Australia would approach GTA and GIWA to consider a review of current standards.

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