

# The Importance of Malting Barley



UK maltsters buy about 1.9 million tonnes of malting barley every year. Around 460,000 tonnes of winter and 1,450,000 tonnes of spring malting barley are used by the UK malting industry to produce 1.55 million tonnes of malt.

The MAGB [Malting Barley Committee](#) has a regime of testing new varieties and, each year, reviews the Approved List to add those which offer good malting, brewing and distilling potential and to remove any which are no longer of commercial interest. This work runs parallel to the HGCA Recommended List evaluation for agronomic characters.

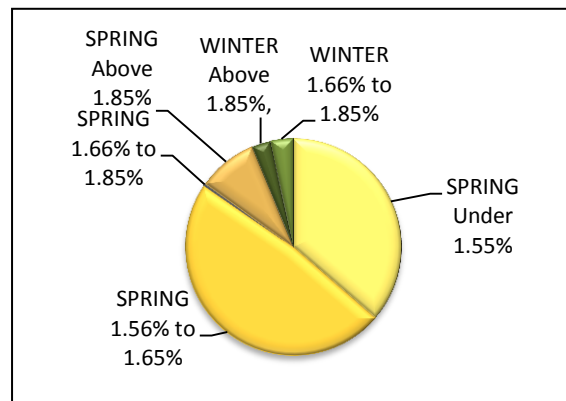
The MAGB website <http://www.ukmalt.com/> holds information for growers on the Approved List for malting varieties, as well as the use of agrochemicals and desiccants, the [Assured UK Malt Standard](#), the moisture statement for food safety, reasons for rejections at intake, and the Wish List – the nitrogen band requirements by region.

Germination is the most critical factor for maltsters, with a minimum 98% viability being the standard. Next, meeting the exacting specifications for nitrogen laid down by brewer and distiller customers is critical to the business of any maltster and is dependent on the barley used.

## Malt for Distilling

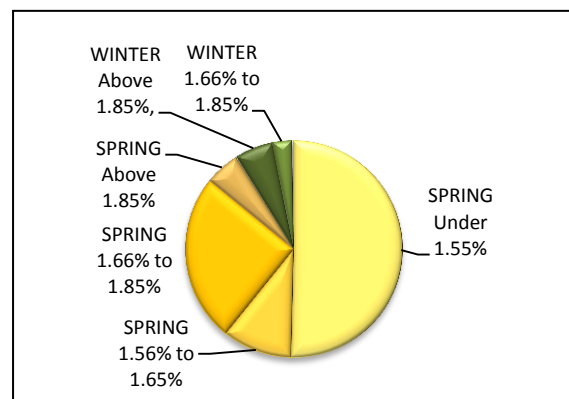
The distilling industry uses malt produced from around 1,000,000 tonnes of spring malting barley each year. In Scotland 85% of the malting barley required is under 1.65% nitrogen

### Scotland



Much of the malting barley grown in Northern England also supplies the distilling industry in Scotland. 60% of the total needed is below 1.65% nitrogen.

### Northern England



Glycosidic nitrile (GN) – Distillers will only accept varieties which are classed as GN non-producers or low GN-producers. New varieties have to be non-producers.

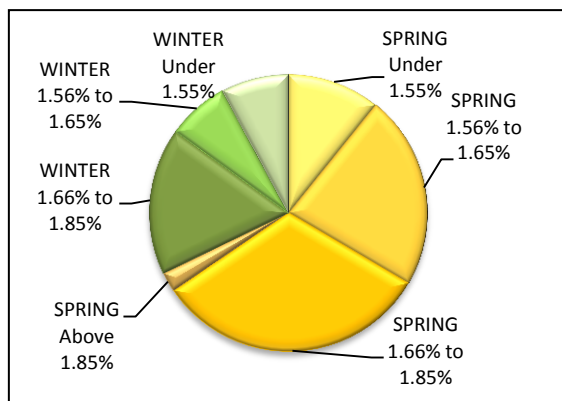
Some barley varieties produce high levels of cyanogenic glucosides during malting. The use as malt of these varieties in the distilling industry can produce significant levels of a contaminating compound. Varieties which are non-producers include Concerto and Odyssey.

### Malt for Brewing

Brewers require malt with a wider nitrogen range generally between 1.65% - 1.85%. There are currently four winter and three spring malting barley varieties fully approved for brewing. Of these, only one – Concerto – is also approved for distilling.

In addition to the UK usage significant volumes of spring malting barley may be exported with the maximum nitrogen specification of 1.85%.

#### Southern and Eastern England



Growing a variety which is approved for both brewing and distilling considerably increases the available market for a grower.

### Other Markets

Malt is also used as an ingredient for many foodstuffs, including breakfast cereals and bakery products. Barley requirements for these markets may vary – information is available from your local maltster about all aspects of the malting barley market.

## List of Local Contacts

If you would like to speak to a Maltster in your area, the names below would be a good starting point:

### Bairds Malt Ltd

Eddie Douglas - 01875 342 205  
[eddie.douglas@bairds-malt.co.uk](mailto:eddie.douglas@bairds-malt.co.uk)

### Boortmalt

Sarah Brown - 01284 772032  
[sarah.brown@boortmalt.com](mailto:sarah.brown@boortmalt.com)

### Crisp Malting Group Ltd

Bob King - 01328 828303  
[bob.king@crispmalt.com](mailto:bob.king@crispmalt.com)

### Diageo Distilling Ltd

Emma Fowler - 0131 519 2000  
[emma.fowler@diageo.com](mailto:emma.fowler@diageo.com)

### Molson Coors Brewing Company Ltd

Jerry Dyson – 07808 097182  
[jerry.dyson@molsoncoors.com](mailto:jerry.dyson@molsoncoors.com)

### Muntons plc

Mike Norfolk – 01449 618407  
07979 537778  
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### Simpsons Malt Ltd

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