



Blazer

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Washington State University • Cooperative Extension Service

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AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH CENTER
For Immediate Release

SCIENTISTS RELEASE NEW BARLEY

PULLMAN, Wash.--Release of a new variety of spring barley was announced today by Dr. James Nielson, director of Washington State University's Agricultural Research Center (ARC).

The variety Blazer was jointly released by WSU, Oregon State University and the University of Idaho. Scientists and the malting and brewing industries foresee it as a possible replacement for the midwest malting varieties, Traill and Larker, presently grown in Washington, Oregon and Idaho.

Dr. Robert Nilan, an agronomist, and Carl Muir, an experimental aide, in WSU's Department of Agronomy and Soils, developed Blazer from a cross made in 1958. Nilan said eight years of testing have shown that Blazer consistently produces heavier yields than Traill and Larker, and has greater resistance to shattering and lodging.

Dr. Nilan said Blazer is being initially released as a feed barley, "but it has all of the potential to become a malting barley." Tests of the variety's malting characteristics are underway and should be complete by the time Blazer becomes available for commercial production in the spring of 1976.

Eight acres of foundation seed are presently being grown in Arizona. The Washington State Crop Improvement Association will contract this spring with Washington farmers to expand the foundation seed this year, producing registered seed.

The registered seed will be planted in the spring of 1975 to produce certified seed which will be available for planting the first commercial crop of Blazer in the spring of 1976.

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Scientists Release New Barley--cont'd.

By that time, Nilan said, commercial testing of Blazer's malting quality should be completed. Most tests have indicated Blazer's malting and brewing characteristics are about equal to Traill.

Nilan said Blazer has been grown for nine years at Pullman, and for eight years at Dayton, Walla Walla and Pomeroy.

At Pullman it produced an average of 3,850 pounds per acre, 605 pounds more than Traill. It was not tested against Larker at Pullman.

At Dayton, Blazer averaged 3,072 pounds per acre, 648 pounds more than Larker and 1,051 pounds more than Traill. At Walla Walla Blazer averaged 2,971 pounds per acre, 590 pounds more than Larker and 830 pounds more than Traill. At Pomeroy, Blazer produced 2,842 pounds per acre, 144 pounds more than Larker and 375 pounds more than Traill.

Nilan said the figures do not take into account differences in yield caused by less loss because of lodging and shattering.

Shattering losses, particularly, can be significant because barley is ready for harvest about the same time as wheat and many farmers postpone harvesting their barley until their wheat is harvested. If wind strikes during this period, Traill and Larker barleys drop part of their grain on the ground when their heads shatter.

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