



29th August 2018

PRESS RELEASE: BRITISH HOP HARVEST 2018

September Hop Harvest:

The British Hop harvest is dramatic, noisy, frenetic and does not last very long. In just a few weeks British hop farms will have completed the harvest of one of our oldest, most romantic, most fabulously aromatic British crops. British Hops are grown in Herefordshire & Worcestershire and in Kent, Surrey & Sussex.

During harvest the whole hop bines are taken out of the hopyards to a “picking” machine which strips the hop bine, separates the hop from the leaf and conveys the hops into the kilns where they are dried before being conditioned and baled.

September is the month when the hop growing year culminates: from stringing the hop yard in March, training the hop plant in April, through the summer months of pest & disease protection, to ensuring that the hops are ready to harvest in September.

It’s an old process: British Hops have been grown by farmers for over 500 years and were harvested by hand until the 1960’s. Since then the process has been mechanised. It’s a romantic process full of wonderful hop aromas: mango, passionfruit, orange, lemon, spice, mint, grass, molasses, blackcurrant, tangerine, summer fruits, pear, summer flowers, apricot and black pepper. It’s noisy, dramatic and unforgettable.

British Hops of the Future:

British Hops are one of only a few crops in the UK to have their own British grower-funded breeding programme, and it was a world-first, dating back to 1906.

From aroma hop crosses made in 2011, 2012 & 2013 there are over 60 new British Hop varieties coming through the programme that have been assessed during the last 5 years – there is no doubt that at least 3 will be market leading aroma hops of the future. These new hops will be exclusively assessed and marketed through hop merchant Charles Faram Ltd over the next few years.

British Hop Science of the Future:

The British Hop breeding programme is always seeking new aroma hops and hops of note. With objectives as broad as pest and disease resistance, climate change resilience, new unknown flavours and perfect agronomic traits - the British hop breeding programme has a lot to achieve. Traditional plant breeding methods deliver new varieties in 10 to 15 years.

2018 marks the year that the British hop breeding programme will introduce molecular science to speed up the hop breeding cycle. The British Association together with Reading University and the East Malling Research Centre have recruited a PhD student, Rob Brown, who will devote the next three years to the introduction of genetics SNP markers into the British hop breeding programme. Rob is currently completing a Masters at Kew Gardens and will start on 1st October.

It’s all about our unique terroir* and low myrcene:

British craft brewers often rave about new world American and New Zealand hops. In return American and New Zealand craft brewers are raving about British Hops. These overseas brewers are now seeking delicate, complex hop aromas to create drinkable session beers. And it is the unique terroir of British Hops with lower levels of myrcene that makes British Hops the perfect hop to brew a drinkable session beer.

All British Hops share the same wonderful “terroir” – great soils and a unique mild maritime climate with fairly even rainfall throughout the year. British Hops use the natural resources



available, which means that very few hops are irrigated. It is this special and sustainable terroir that produces British hops delicate and complex aromas and makes them perfect for brewing the best session beers in the world.

Even in 2018, with the extremely warm weather and dry conditions, British Hops have thrived. It is anticipated that 2018 will be an average crop rather than a bumper crop but what is definite is that the aromas will be fantastic thanks to all the hot sunny weather.

For British craft brewers seeking the high notes in British Hops the key varieties are:

- Jester® hops – intense grapefruit and tropical fruit notes
- Olicana® – mango, grapefruit and passionfruit flavours
- Admiral hops – cooked marmalade, orangey citrus
- Bramling Cross hops – blackcurrant, spicy, lemon
- UK Cascade hops – lychees, floral, grapefruit
- Endeavour hops (a British daughter of Cascade) – citrus, summer fruits
- Target hops – sage, spice, citrus

For a full list of British Hop varieties: <http://www.britishhops.org.uk/british-hop-varieties/>

The facts about British Hops are:

- There are over 33 commercially grown British Aroma Hop varieties in the UK
- British Hops represents 1.5% of world hop production
- The UK is the only country to have focused so strongly on disease resistance, making British Hops both environmentally friendly and inevitably more appealing
- The low trellis hop growing system was developed in the UK
- In the early days, the sole reason for using hops was to preserve the beer in good condition; Englishmen reluctantly accepted the bittering effect
- Hops have a long history of use in folk medicine where they have been used to treat a variety of complaints. Hops are thought to have a sedative action and have been traditionally used in hop pillows

*Terroir: The factors that affect terroir are the soil, geography, geology, topography and climate. The term is derived from the French “terre” meaning “land”.

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Note to Editors: To visit a farm during the British Hop harvest or for more information please contact: Ali Capper, British Hop Association: 01886 884202, 07973 562139 or alicapper@mac.com www.britishhops.org.uk