

MillerCoors Barley Innovations: Creating New Varieties for the Future

Brewing company MillerCoors works with exclusive growers to develop high quality barley varieties that require less water to grow.

Barley is to beer as grapes are to wine, and MillerCoors has set the highest standards for barley growing in the industry to brew the best beer possible. MillerCoors' exclusive barley growers lead a variety development program that has not only raised barley quality, but enabled them to grow more barley on fewer acres using less water.

In this video, barley breeder Dr. Bob Brunick and MillerCoors VP of Brewing and Research David Ryder discuss MillerCoors' barley breeding program, and how it has yielded new varieties of barley that meet the company's stringent requirements for quality and sustainability.

MillerCoors leads one of the oldest private barley breeding programs in North America, dedicated to producing superior barley grains for 65 years. MillerCoors has pinpointed the best areas in the United States to grow barley, focusing on high country areas and high desert areas with low summer rainfall.

The two varieties that MillerCoors growers currently produce commercially are Moravian 69 and Moravian 115. Explains Gary Beck, barley farmer for Stevenson's Ranch, "What we've noticed with the new varieties is it's allowed us to keep up with the times. The varieties have become a little shorter, germination is better. Fifteen years ago, if you had a hundred bushel an acre, you were doing great. Now these new varieties - 120, 130 bushels. That's where you would be at with the new varieties."

The program has enabled MillerCoors to develop barley that is resistant to disease and pests, requires less land to grow and conserves water. According to Dayna Gross of The Nature Conservancy, combining these new varieties with other innovations like changes to irrigation practices will make a powerful tool for water savings.

MillerCoors' efforts are already achieving measurable results. In 2011, improved barley yields saved 7.35 billion gallons of water compared to MillerCoors' barley yields in the 1970s. To learn more, see [MillerCoors' 2012 Sustainability Report](#).