

Sundre Barley to be released to growers next spring

TOP YIELDING VARIETY DEVELOPED AT LACOMBE

The distributor of Sundre Barley says the stock seed of the new variety will be released to the market in the spring of 2008.

Seed grower and distributor Bob Mastin acquired the plant breeder and distribution rights for the large, six-row smooth-awned grain from Alberta Agriculture's Lacombe Field Crop Development Centre after seeing at the Centre's open house in 2005.

He won the rights in a David-and-Goliath competition with some of Canada's biggest seed companies.

Mastin says Sundre Barley,

"has the highest grain yield of any barley ever developed at Lacombe and one of the highest forage yields. It also has excellent disease resistance in Canada, the U.S. and Mexico.

Last season, in his own development plantings, he seeded 64 acres of small parcels in Sundre and Peace River and had yields "exceeding 160 bushels per acre".

This year he expanded the acreage and is on track to seed 3,000 acres annually and produce 300,000 bushels for sale.

A key element to his suc-

cessful bid was to commit to a ratio of distributing 85 per cent pedigreed seed and 15 per cent common seed.

In the grain business, the ratio is usually the reverse of

that, and seed growers end up competing against themselves.

Mastin says he will also go to the market offering relatively low royalty-levy terms

The combination of the pedigree: common seed ratio and the favorable royalty terms will reduce the incentive for farmers to violate his plant breeder

rights by pirating the variety.

Combined with the merits of theseed, these business practices, he expects, will open a "huge" market.



CALENDAR "PIN-UP" BARLEY – The theme of the 2008 Canadian Wheat Board calendar is "farm hands", so Sundre seed grower and distributor Bob Mastin submitted this photo of his own hands holding the promising new Sundre Barley variety that will be on the market in the spring. The CWB announced last week that the photo will be included in the calendar.

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