



Bring on the Malt Flavor and Aroma: ASBC Conducted First International Symposium on Malt

By Xiang S Yin, Program Chair, ASBC Inaugural Symposium on Malt Flavor and Aroma



Symposium attendees at the University of MN Barley Fields

The 1st ASBC Malt Flavor and Aroma Symposium was concluded in Roseville, Minnesota, U.S.A, on June 13, 2018. The three-day conference attracted over 120 attendees from at least 10 countries. Twenty-seven notable speakers, panelists, and poster presenters from around the world shared their latest knowledge about the flavor impact of barley and malt on beer and spirits. Through the field trips, attendees viewed the operations in the supply-chain at the barley breeding plots, malting and research facilities, and a major craft beer production. The social evening on the Mississippi provided a calming time for attendees to relax, network, and enjoy the pleasant Minnesota summer.

The audience was highly engaged with active discussions throughout all the presentations and roundtable sessions. The opening lecture by William Rahr underlined the challenges and opportunities in malt as the next big flavor frontier, and the closing speech by Chris Swersey envisioned the future paths for exploration in malting barley and brewing.

Some high level technical takeaways included:

- Malt is the new hops: identification of flavor compounds and their metabolomics are exciting directions pursued by multiple institutions.
- Barley growing region (E) as well as genotypes (G), plus malting (M) and brewing (B) ... plus cooperage (C in whisky) are all important factors to be considered in designing the flavor of products.
- Flavor is complicated: all compounds (regardless of OAV—odor activity value) are required to make the malty flavor (e.g., Asahi identified 76 compounds).
- Some future quality traits to watch include LOX, DMS, gelatinization temperature, amino acid composition.
- Challenges: malt flavor profile does not always correlate to beer's flavor profile, but preference on the malt and beer flavor appears to be aligned.



William Rahr delivering the opening keynote



Malt in the Rahr Malthouse in Shakopee, MN

The conference would not have been such a high-quality event without the huge effort of all members of the Program Committee from constructing the program, fundraising, hosting the field trips, to speaking or moderating at sessions. Our colleagues from the headquarters demonstrated their master skills in arranging the details of the logistics.

The ASBC is grateful to all 10 sponsors for the best effort in supporting the event with such short notice, and all the beer donating organizations are greatly appreciated throughout the symposium.

While many attendees thank the ASBC Program Committee for instilling the event, our gratitude to all of you, particularly the speakers, panelists, moderators, poster presenters, and field trip hosts for their outstanding support, and we look forward to your continued contribution to the next ASBC Malt Symposium!

