

Presented by the HOP GROWERS UNION OF THE CZECH REPUBLIC AT A PRESS CONFERENCE IN ZATEC ON SEPTEMBER 4TH 2009

□□□□□□□□ THE 2009 HOP HARVEST IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC

According to the data of the Central Institute for Supervising and Testing in Agriculture the total harvested acreage in the Czech Republic was 5307 ha, which means a decrease of 28 ha compared to the year 2008. Variety SAAZ remains the main variety grown on the 87,18 % of the total acreage. New hop plants were planted on the acreage of 257ha, i.e. 4,84 %, mostly in the Saaz hop growing region (199 ha), Auscha hop growing region (33 ha) and Tirschitz hop growing region (25 ha).

An early springtime and high temperatures influenced fast hop growth immediately after their pruning. The next weather development was optimal regarding both temperatures and precipitation. No big problems occurred during the springtime works and labour force was easier to provide than in the last year. The prices of fertilizers and expenses for labour force mostly increased.

During the vegetation period strong wind, rain and hail-storms affected the hop growing areas. The hops were damaged most by heavy hail-storms on the acreage over 400 ha in May, further by strong wind at the end of July when 109 ha of hops gardens fallen down and next 36 ha on 17th August yet.

The 2009 hop harvest started on 14th August, firstly mainly on the fallen hop gardens, afterwards all hop growers started harvesting in the week 17. – 21.8. We estimate the hop harvest will finish in the first week of September, some hop growers will finish until 10th September and late varieties will be harvested until 20th September.

PRELIMINARY HOP HARVEST RESULTS

Due to both disastrous weather (hails, windstorms) during vegetation period and climatic conditions in the second half of August the total Czech hop production of Saaz variety is expected to be around 5000t, i.e. lower by 10% than in the last year. This result makes number of hop growers disappointed since hops were expected to yield much more even month ago.

In the main Saaz hop growing region (73,5 % acreage of hop gardens in the Czech Rep.) the total hop production of SAAZ variety is expected, compared to the last year, a decrease by 350 t with an estimated yield of 1,02 t/ha. The yield in the Tirschitz growing region varies slightly below average (1,35 t/ha) and in the Auscha hop growing region 1,17 t/ha. We estimate slightly higher overall production of other Czech hop varieties (Premiant, Sládek, Agnus ..) than last year with the production of 1250 t due to an acreage increase. The total Czech production is now estimated to reach 6250 t, i.e. 7,14 % less than last year.

An average alpha acids content of Saaz variety varies around 3,6 – 3,8 % depending on the individual growing region. With regard to the climatic conditions during the harvest time we estimate a decrease of hop quality in some hop growing regions. Due to the long harvest and warm weather some hop growers are facing the red spider mite (*Tetranychus urticae* Koch.) and downy mildew of hops (*Pseudoperonospora humuli*) difficulties.

The most important fact is that the Czech hop growing industry will be able to fulfill its long-term contracts with consumers and make sure to be a reliable partner for the breweries in the future. The main task for the next years remains to renovate hop-gardens and thereby stabilize production in order to secure deliveries of high quality Czech hops in the future.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE EXCHANGE RATE IS NOT FAVOURABLE FOR THE CZECH ECONOMY IN THE LONG TERM PERIOD

Since the main part of the hops from the Czech Republic are exported (app. 80 %), the development of the exchange rate has a crucial influence on the economy of the Czech hop growing industry