

# VarietyView

## Introduction

**As the new cropping year gets underway, there are plenty of new varieties taking their place in rotations and fresh ideas being discussed.**

Senova has been very pleased with the performance of all our varieties in trial in what has been a very challenging year.

**Kitty** has continued to impress with its outstanding specific weight and stiff straw and it's great to see it fast becoming one of the country's top two-row feed choices. Recommended last year, Kitty is the start of an innovative pipeline from Senova with more trait focused lines with dual BaYMV and BDYV tolerance coming to market.

Looking to wheat, it's hard to ignore that yellow rust was the main talking point for many with a new strain with virulence overcoming the Yr15 gene. This has led to some varieties ratings dropping considerably.

Regretfully, although not based on single major gene resistance **Hector** was one of the varieties to see a major drop in it's yellow rust rating. After careful consideration it was decided to not support Hector in RL trials.

It was the right and responsible thing to do; we recognise that growers need robust, resilient varieties in today's economic climate and we have every confidence in the winter wheat varieties coming up behind it. We're keen to focus on each variety individually and we're confident each of the lines coming through the system have a place and story.

Otherwise, as this newsletter goes to press, there is good demand for our market-leading winter oat and winter bean varieties. There is also a new team installed at DEFRA – hopefully the farming industry will now receive the clarity and confidence it needs to prosper.

**Kitty**  
WINTER BARLEY

**Hector**  
WINTER WHEAT



## New Managing Director at Senova

**George Goodwin joined Senova as managing director in July.**

Having previously been Head of Technical at Elsoms, where he spent over nine years building up a career in sales and product development in combinable crops, George has also worked for Agrii and BirdsEye.

"It's an exciting time to be joining Senova and I'm looking forward to working with the team on both introducing new varieties and supporting existing choices," says George.

"Farming is facing significant challenges and new genetic solutions are required urgently," he adds. "Striking the right balance between sustainability and productivity will be key, as we work with growers and partners to secure a profitable long-term future for all."





# Winter Oats: changing of the guard

There's increasing and widespread recognition from end users that our recommended winter oat variety **Cromwell** suits their needs and performs very well in the mill.

That should give oat growers the confidence they have been looking for to move from old favourite **Mascani** to the newer choice this autumn, with the bonus of getting extra yield and better lodging resistance if they do.

Grain quality characteristics – always sought after and scrutinised by millers – are key to this switch. Cromwell has a high kernel content of 74.8% and a good specific weight of 55 kg/hl, while its Mascani parentage means that it passes the all-important hullability test too.

For winter oat growers, Cromwell's short and very stiff straw will also appeal – as will its treated yield of 103, being 8% above Mascani.

Looking ahead, coming up behind Cromwell are two more husked winter oat varieties, both of which are creating plenty of interest.

Candidate **Rannoch** is up for recommendation later this year. Another Mascani cross, Rannoch takes yields on again to 105 and has an 8 rating for crown rust resistance – putting it head and shoulders above other variety choices.

That superior disease resistance also shows up in its untreated yield results in the AHDB's RL trials – Rannoch's five-year average figure is 117%.

Continuing with the Senova tradition of marketing oat varieties bred by IBERS, there is also a winter oat variety called **Maunsell** in development.

Named after Cark Maunsell, who identified value added markets for oats and was responsible for opening up global cosmetic and pharmaceutical market opportunities for the crop, the new variety is still a few years behind Cromwell.

"There is plenty of exciting development and breeding work being carried out on oats," says our managing director George Goodwin. "We know that their value in food markets, low input nature and suitability for sustainable rotations are all in their favour, so it's good to see the latest varieties being well received."

## Cromwell

WINTER OAT

### Boost for British Oats

**Plant-based drinks manufacturer Alpro has committed to using 100% British oats in its oat drinks sold in the UK.**

The company will produce 58 million litres of British oat drink from its Kettering plant, with the intention of sourcing oats from farms within an 80-mile radius of the facility.

According to the latest market research, the UK oat-based drinks market has increased in value from £155 million to £275 million in the last five years.

**alpro**

**Mascani**  
WINTER OAT

**Rannoch**  
WINTER OAT

**Maunsell**  
WINTER OAT



# Barley success to continue with strong line-up

**We have been thrilled with the uptake of our new two-row winter barley, Kitty, this autumn and believe it to be one of the top three selling two-row feed varieties with over 10% market share.**

Kitty's success can be attributed to its combination of excellent grain quality and strong agronomics, including resistance to both strain 1 and strain 2 of Barley Yellow Mosaic Virus (BaYMV).

A Valerie cross, Kitty joined the AHDB Recommended List 2025/26 at the end of last year, with commentators all noting that it offered the highest specific weight on the list at 72.7 kg/hl – something that farmers are known to give priority.

With a treated yield of 103, Kitty is performing well and even better on farm. An impressive yield of 106 in the North region makes it the joint highest performing 2 row for this part of the country.

Kitty's virus resistance gives it a unique position as one of only two varieties to offer this level of virus protection. It comes from having two resistance genes – *rym4* and *rym5* – which give it defence against both known strains of BaYMV.

The only two recommended winter barley varieties with both resistance genes are Senova's Kitty and Valerie, a feature which is highlighted on the Recommended List so that growers can make informed choices.

Kitty's other attributes include short, very stiff straw and good disease resistance ratings, including a 7 for Rhynchosporium. The lowest brackling score is a welcome addition to such a good all-rounder, as it avoids stem weakness problems higher up the plant.

We are also excited to have **Darcie** as a two-row winter barley candidate – the only candidate in this market sector.

Darcie is another variety to offer the dual resistance to BaYMV.

A high yielding type, it also boasts the highest Rhynchosporium and net blotch resistance ratings. Having given its best performance in the east of the country, it is likely to be a good partner to Kitty which shines in the north.

We also have a new BYDV-tolerant type waiting in the wings and moving through the system. **Paquita** is a two-row feed variety, which will be up for recommendation towards the end of 2026.

Already recommended is BYDV-tolerant **Organa**, which will help growers with the move to growing insecticide-free crops and keeping input use down.

We also have very high yielding **Nos Olena** on the Recommended List, which has given its best performance in the east and the north.



**Kitty**  
WINTER BARLEY

**Darcie**  
WINTER BARLEY

**Organa**  
WINTER BARLEY

**nos Olena**  
WINTER BARLEY





# Winter Wheat opportunities

We have three new winter wheats working their way through the system, all of which have something to offer in their relevant market sector.

It's early days and we will keep you posted on their progress, but the line-up includes **Nos Beast**, a soft Group 4 feed wheat with distilling potential.

Joining it are a potential bread-making type, **SEWC157 (Gibson)** and a hard feed wheat **BAW95 (Girton)**.

**nos Beast**  
WINTER WHEAT

WINTER WHEAT  
**Gibson**

WINTER WHEAT  
**Girton**

## Triticale and Rye prove popular

We have seen good sales of Lumaco, our high yielding winter triticale this autumn.

Sitting at the top of the triticale Descriptive List, Lumaco has a yield of 107 and a 9 for yellow rust resistance.

Otherwise, our winter rye **Astranos** is also finding favour. Both of these crops offer versatility on-farm, finding a place in Anaerobic Digestion plants as well as for wider uses, where a lower input approach is welcomed.

WINTER TRITICALE  
**Lumaco**

WINTER HYBRID RYE  
**Astranos**

## Winning with Winter Beans

Our high yielding winter bean varieties, Vincent and Vespa, will be going in the ground again next month having sold well this autumn.

Both have a yield of 108 and very good standing ability, with Vincent having a larger seed size and a better downy mildew rating.

That bigger seed makes it the ideal choice for the human consumption market, believes sales manager Hugh Harley, although both varieties meet the requirements and are suitable for export.

Despite a declining area, winter beans remain a low input option, helping to reduce workloads and bringing an inherent fertility benefit to the next crop – considered to be worth as much as 0.7 t/ha in the following wheat.

In Kent, farm manager Tim Keir of Chislet Court Farm had a pleasant surprise this year, when his crop of Vespa gave average yields of 4.5 t/ha.

That was in line with his five-year average for winter beans – something he was not expecting after the drought conditions that the south-east experienced.

He grew 60 ha of Vespa, drilling them in the last week of October on moisture retentive soils. One of two break crops that Tim relies on, he finds they fit in well with the farm's rotation as they can be drilled last, behind both oilseed rape and winter wheat.



**Vincent**  
WINTER BEAN

**VESPA**  
Winter Bean