

Gluten-Free Beer

BY MICHAEL KUDERKA

As you start stocking your shelves with those wonderful, golden, cloudy, wheat beers that seem to be the perfect accompaniment to warm, sunny, spring and summer afternoons, don't forget to leave some room, close by, for a selection of Gluten-Free beers; trends say that this niche market is poised to grow.

Brands and brewers that produce Gluten-Free products include:

***Bard's Tale Dragon's
Gold Sorghum Lager***

Bard's Tale Beer - Lee's Summit, MO

Gluten-Free Ale

Hambleton Ales - England, UK

Green's Discovery Amber

Green's Gluten-Free Beers - England, UK

Green's Endeavour

Green's Gluten-Free Beers - England, UK

Green's Quest Tripel

Green's Gluten-Free Beers - England, UK

Lakefront New Grist

Lakefront Brewery, Inc. - Milwaukee, WI

Ramapo Valley Brewery Honey Lager

Ramapo Valley Brewery - Hilburn, NY

Redbridge Lager

Anheuser-Busch InBev - St. Louis, MO

St. Peter's G Free

St. Peter's Brewery - England, UK

St. Peter's Sorghum Beer

St. Peter's Brewery - England, UK

Toleration Gluten-Free Lager

Hambleton Ales - England, UK

Why Gluten-Free Beer?

Despite what you may think, celiac disease (a sensitivity to wheat products) is becoming an increasingly common diagnosis for many Americans and with the development of widely available diagnostic testing it is now reported that as many as one in every 133 people in the

United States has celiac disease. Even more surprising, it is thought that about 97 percent of the people with celiac disease have yet to be diagnosed. So understanding the disease and stocking a good alternative brand selection could establish a nice customer following for your store.

Celiac Disease Basics

When talking about wheat sensitivities, you will hear the terms gluten and wheat used interchangeably. However, gluten is actually the specific component of wheat that people with celiac disease have the problem digesting, and it should be noted that grains other than wheat have gluten, including rye and barley. For individuals with celiac disease, eating or drinking wheat or these other grains causes significant bowel inflammation.

As an overview, the immune system in individuals with celiac disease attacks the intestinal lining in response to its exposure to gliadin, a metabolite of gluten. When the immune system attacks the intestinal lining it robs the intestine of its ability to absorb nutrients. This damage to the intestine leads to symptoms of diarrhea and bloating following the body's exposure to gluten, and this in turn causes weight loss, malnutrition and poor growth because of the intestinal damage.

Challenges in Producing a Gluten-Free Beer

In brewing theory, the proteins from barley or wheat are converted into amino acids during the brewing process and therefore should be naturally gluten-free. However gluten experts dispute this idea. In order to safeguard against adverse reaction, gluten-free beers should be brewed with ingredients and adjuncts that

are completely free of gluten-containing cereals, such as wheat, kamut, spelt, barley, rye, malt flavorings, triticale, and in some cases oats.

As a result, the majority of Gluten-Free beers available are brewed with sorghum and buckwheat as substitutes for traditional used brewing grains. In the end the goal is to produce a product that has less than 0.02% (200 parts per million) gluten.

As opposed to trying decide what ingredients are acceptable, and if the brewing process by default produces beer low in gluten, it is best to stock brands that are certified and /or are labeled gluten-free. With the number of gluten-free ales and lagers now available both you and your customers can be excited and comforted by the number of great options available.

NFCA

For more information about celiac disease, go to the The National Foundation for Celiac Awareness website at www.revolutionhealth.com/pages/national-foundation-for-celiac-awareness.

Thinking Out-of-the-Box?

How innovative is your store at selling beer? We would like to know. If you have promotions that go beyond refilling the cold box, we would like to hear from you and share your "out-of-the-box" thinking with our fellow *Beer Trends* readers.

E-mail me at mkuderka@mcbasset.com with your successful ideas for selling beer, along with your contact information. If we write about your program in our column we will send you a free copy of The 3rd Edition of *The Essential Reference of Domestic Brewers and Their Bottled Brands*.

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