Beer contamination drops in 2nd Big QC Day

Big QC Day generated hundreds of more entries during its relaunch. Participating breweries should have received their results by the time this newsletter is published. The event again demonstrated the high level of quality of craft beer and new changes in the testing program this year shed light on other trends.

The tests were designed as a way to bring these important tests to the smaller brewers, and give those who already test regularly, whether big or small, an opportunity to see how their results compare to an independent laboratory. Overall results for last year were printed in the MBAA Technical Quarterly.

Many new tests were added this year, including calorific analysis, contamination, yeasts and White Labs, which is based in the city, plans numerous functions, including some downtown festivities. Please visit the booth for more details. The White Labs booth is located at #110 and #112.

CBC coming to home turf

White Labs is welcoming people to its backyard when the Craft Brewers Conference comes to San Diego. The company, which is based in the city, plans numerous functions, including some downtown festivities. Please visit the booth for more details. The White Labs booth is located at #110 and #112.

The event is returning to San Diego after just a five-year hiatus. The World Beer Cup Gala Awards Dinner will take place on Saturday, April 19, at the Town & Country Resort as part of the Craft Brewers Conference. The awards dinner will be paired with World Beer Cup winning beers. Winners of the 2008 World Beer Cup will be announced at the dinner.

Keynote speaker, Richard Doyle, will open the Crafters Association's (BA) 25th annual Craft Brewers Conference on April 17th.

More than 1,600 of the world's brewers, brewery owners, and brewing supply professionals are expected at this year's CBC.

Overview of hop shortage

By Hopunion staff

In November Ralph Olson did a Power Hour presentation regarding the hop shortage. As you will see below acreage steadily decreased, but is now trying to climb its way back up, however there are many obstacles in the way. The bottom line is that there are not enough hops being grown today to satisfy the needs of brewers and other usages. Many feel this number to be around 10-15%, or maybe more. Turn to page 5 to find a diagram (graphic: #2) following reflecting acres.

The following are some notes about the diagram:

• Increase of around 5,000 acres in the world.
• USA +2,200
• China +2,500
• Germany +1,200

See “Hops,” page 3

Style Matters: Tips for making Belgian Tripels

In each issue, CBQ spotlights a particular beer style and provides tips from an ingredient and fermentation perspective. In this issue, we look at Belgian Tripels.

Hop Notes: This style of beer is extremely complex and harbors many competing flavors that tend to overshadow the presence of hops. A subtle floral or spicy variety is typically used. For this brew there are a number of varieties to choose from such as: German Hallertau, Czech/US Saaz, German Spalt, Styrian Goldings, UK Fuggle, German Hertbrucker or German Select. With the hop shortage and limited availability of some of these varieties we would suggest using German Tradition, or domestic Vanguard. The hops you select should complement the clove-like phenols and sometimes fruity, citrusy, or spiciness which is commonly found in this style of beer. Bitterness can be medium to high and should be in the range of 20-35 IBUs depending on your preference. Hop aroma can range from mild to none at all. Some commercial examples include: Brugse Tripel, New Belgium Trippel, Westmalle Tripel, Val-Dieu Triple, La Trappe Tripel, and St. Bernardus Tripel. To view more varieties of hops for your brewing needs please visit our website at: www.Hopunion.com.

See “Style Matters,” page 8
QC Day again brings samples from afar

This year’s Big QC Day has turned out to be quite an interesting event!

We have received many beer samples from across the country and around the world, and many returning participants.

For 2008, we have incorporated some new components to your beer analysis, including Real and Apparent Extract, Real and Apparent Attenuation, pH, and Color.

We are currently using an Anton-Paar Alcolyzer, equipped with a density meter and beer color option in order to provide these more comprehensive results for you.

Each person in the lab has been working diligently to test the samples and provide feedback about the results of the testing are invited to write Neva at neva@whitelabs.com.

Additionally, results breaking down the testing by style and region are available on www.whitelabs.com. Turn to page 1 for more information on Big QC Day.

Neva Parker is the lab manager for White Labs. Write her at neva@whitelabs.com.

From the Lab

Neva Parker

sample and test your beers over a three week period!

Again, the samples are being tracked through each step of the QC Day testing procedure using the Yeastman bar-coding and tracking system to ensure ease and accuracy of the reporting.

We hope you find these test results valuable, and that they provide feedback about the results of the testing are invited to write Neva at neva@whitelabs.com.

Editor’s note: The proceeding report was written prior to the completion of testing. Those wishing to provide feedback about the results of the testing are invited to write Neva at neva@whitelabs.com.

Big QC Day

ries per 12 ounces. The complete lists of tests, which were sent via mail to participating breweries, follows.

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Big QC Day

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This test was conducted using Hsu’s Lactobacillus medium, or HLP. This medium is used to look for the presence of Lactobacillus and Pediococcus. These bacteria are anaerobic, heat sensitive bacteria.

They are called “beer spillovers” because they are most often associated with post wort production contamination. The industry standard is less than 10 colony forming units (CFUs) per ml. If the CFUs are over 10, the beer may develop flavor problems. However, any CFU’s found from this test should cause concern and an evaluation of your brewing and packaging process.

Total VDK (including diacetyl): VDK is measured on our Perkin Elmer Clarius 500 Gas Chromatograph and Headspace Sampler. VDK (vici- nil, dinitol, etc.) consists of diacetyl and 2,3-Pentadione. The test includes heating the sample, which drives diacetyl precursors to diacetyl.

The lower the number the better, in most cases. If you are under 100 ppb you are doing well. The numbers vary depending on the yeast strain and fermentation procedure. If the number is high, perhaps in the 200 range, the brewery may not be performing an adequate diacetyl rest.

Or again, it could be the yeast strain. Examples of strains with higher VDKs are the British strains and some lager strains. Very high VDK levels can be an indication of contamination. Additional tests can be performed that can separate diacetyl and 2,3-Pentadione levels.
Belgian styles gaining in popularity at the right time

Everyone in beer knows this is a time when Belgian styles in many places are a big hit with consumers. The proliferation of Belgian-style beer bars in metro areas is one example, as is the recent ranking by a major consumer magazine of the best beer bars - almost all of which have a wide selection of Belgian-style beers.

This creates a splendid opportunity for craft brewers for a number of reasons. Crafting a Belgian style should meet with enthusiasm from consumers who if they are not already fans of the style have surely been made aware of its flavor possibilities through the extensive media coverage of these beers.

What’s more, it’s a wonderful opportunity to create beers with less intensive hops, and is thus the perfect style for these days when some popular hops are in shorter supply.

We are already seeing a new generation of brewers in North America expanding the traditional standards of Belgian styles, creating something of a Belgian-American hybrid. If you have not already dabbled in these styles, now is the time to start.

If you are looking to expand your Belgian offerings or considering crafting them for the first time, here are a few tips to consider:

- **Fermentation:** Some brewers of Belgian styles do not bring their beers to dryness on the belief that consumers are expecting some residual sweetness. I believe this perceived expectation is wrong in most cases and regardless well-crafted Belgian styles might have a hint of sweetness even if they are actually very dry. Consider Chimay may have perceived sweetness but that is the fruitiness of the beer, a contribution of the yeast. The beer is actually very dry.
- **Sanitation:** Farmhouse styles bring up some wonderful thoughts and images, but don’t have to be brewing around pigs to create great beers. Nowhere is sanitation more critical than in making Belgians, especially considering the need to protect your regular beers from contamination.
- **To Yeast:** Yeast combinations can be good. We have a Belgian yeast blend (WLP575) that is part Trappist, part Belgian Ale (these are not strain names, but a reflection of these styles), and it makes an interesting and complex beer.

If you have not already dabbled in these styles, now is the time to start.

Letter from the President

Chris White

White Labs employees team up to fight breast cancer

They do it because ‘everybody deserves a lifetime’

**Letter from White Labs:**

We, at White Labs, have taken on an incredible challenge. On November 21, 2008, several of your favorite yeast ranchers will be walking 60 miles over the course of three days, camping out at night with thousands of other women and men taking this journey with us.

It’s for an event called the Breast Cancer 3-Day, which benefits Susan G. Komen for the Cure and the National Philanthropic Trust Breast Cancer Fund. Every advancement in breast cancer research, treatment, education and prevention in the last 25 years has been touched by a Komen for the Cure grant. They are working hard to build a future without breast cancer, and our team plans on raising $25,000.00 to help bring us closer to that goal.

Our team name is Beer for Boobs. All the ladies (and maybe some dudes—who will be a part of this team we think we should live long enough for our boobies to enjoy all the great beer in this world. What a cause right?)! Please consider making a donation of $50.00. You can donate online at www.The3Day.org. Please also ask your employer if they will double your donation with a matching gift.

Without a cure, one in eight women in the U.S. will continue to be diagnosed with breast cancer. That’s why Lisa White, Ashley Paulsworth, JoAnne Carilli-Stevenson, Meg Falbo, & Stefanie Wacker have already committed to walking in the 3-Day. Because everyone deserves a lifetime.

Just follow the link at www.the3day.org to visit our team page to make a donation. You can donate to any of the team members on Beer for Boobs. Please search for our team name when you donate. If you don’t want to donate online, please download and print a donation form and mail it to the address on the form. Or you can call 800.996.3DAY to donate over the phone. We would like to reach my fundraising goal by July 4th, so don’t delay!

Thank you for your support. If you have a story about how breast cancer has touched your life, please share it with us. All of our team member would love to know how we are walking for you. Maybe we are walking for your mom, your sister, your wife, your friend…maybe for you.

Sincerely,

Lisa White
Beer for Boobs, Team Captain
P.S. Soon, we will be offering special sponsorship for the t-shirts we will be selling and wearing on our 60 mile trek.

If you have a story about how breast cancer has touched your life, please share it with us. All of our team member would love to know how we are walking for you. Maybe we are walking for your mom, your sister, your wife, your friend…maybe for you.

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You are right about the hoarding mentality. The bigger
inning. There is some good to doing long term contracts, but
some idea about the future and what brewers are think-
ing that person with the dealer. It also gives the dealer
this locks a customer up for a long period, so effectively
swings than other institutional shortages in the short term?
over time? Won’t a hording mentality cause greater price
demand even if every harvest was the best in years. What
hops of various types. Obviously, if this behavior is now
Olson’s answers.

Payment on hops to be due sooner.

Other downstream products for aroma and bittering. Brew-
ers need to be prepaid for prices to remain high and for
payment on hops to be due sooner.

Below are questions that brewers sent in, with Ralph
Olsen’s answers.

Many seem to be purchasing multiple years worth of
hops of various types. Obviously, if this behavior is now
the norm, short term supply won’t be able to keep up with
demand even if every harvest was the best in years. What
are your thoughts about changes in purchasing behavior
over time? Won’t a hoarding mentality cause greater price
swings than other institutional shortages in the short term?

Dealers like to get long term contracts, first because
this locks a customer up for a long period, so effectively
keeps that person with the dealer. It also gives the dealer
some idea about the future and what brewers are think-
ing. There is some good to doing long term contracts, but
you are right about the hoarding mentality. The bigger
problem is that we will be backing all the hops needed in
the coming years and contracting, while helping some,
doesn’t really answer the shortage. What we really need
is for brewers to understand that it’s OK to have longer
than a one year supply of hops. I constantly get calls from
brewers who are out of hops in September and October.
Traditionally brewers would carry a 6-12 month carry
over supply, so come harvest time they would have an
18-24 month supply at that time. This gave the brewers
hops that might be needed right away. An extra inventory
of hops can come in handy should sales go better than
normal during a given year. Traditionally future contracts
would be kept conservative, but it was not unusual to see
3-5 year contracts done in the past. It is especially im-
portant to have some excess inventory if a brewery uses
pellets or extract because that product does need to be
processed by the hop merchant. More on that with a ques-
tion asked below.

When will pellet hops become available – when will
2007 orders be ready to ship?

The biggest problem here is that brewers don’t un-
derstand very well, the time it takes to process hops. We
have two shifts running here, and we use the facilities at
Yakima Chief as well. Even with three shifts, we will be
pelletizing thru February and most likely into March of
this coming year. Most runs will take a week or two to
to complete. I used to run the hoppers that we were out of first, but
today when you are out of everything, this becomes a
real problem. I have people asking for every variety and
they just can’t be run all at once. The other processors of
pellets and extracts often run June or later. In the
past, when inventories were plentiful, one could just ship
off the shelf to the brewer who needed some variety quickly.
Today with hops being short, there is very little on the
shelf to send out. I understand this shortage is also af-
flicting lots of major breweries around the world who are
also short on hop inventories.

Is the volume of hops tapped up in contracts this year
much greater than last year? Are you seeing a lot more
craft brewers, who in the past bought hops on the spot
market, now signing contracts for 2008?

I would say that the contracting has been picking up
every year in a slow, but methodical way. I think now that
tings are short, this can accelerate, but it is very difficult
to just sell hops if you are still buying them. I am working
on deliveries and prices for 2008 with growers at a meet-
ing this week, but with the market being so high, this is
not an easy process. Growers are wanting or expecting
big dollars for the hops. One must be careful to not sell
something they don’t yet have.

How does this shortage affect the supplier’s ability to
store hops?

The difficulty in storing hops, especially for craft brew-
ers is the many pieces that we have to look at. While
we will continue to store hops, this is a very difficult thing
to do. Keeping track of it all is a nightmare to say the
least, but we do understand many breweries don’t have
room themselves. I think this was something that most
traditional brewers always made room for a fair supply of
hops. Many brewers today don’t put the same emphasis
on storage for materials. Good question and one that I
wrestle with all the time.

Which varieties, if you are willing to say, are going to
disappear/be phased out/too limited to count on ac-
quiring in the next few year?

The varieties that will go out are the lower yielding
ones. Unfortunately aroma hops tend to be lower yielding
than high alpha hops, but some in particular are difficult.
Worst ones would be US Hallertau, US Fuggle, US Tettnang, US Golding, Horizon and another one that can
be tough could be Wifamettle if for no other reason, one
major brewery buys virtually all of them. I think most of
the popular hops are pretty much sold out. I have been
buying from Europe to see here on the open market.
They are expensive over there, but have had some suc-
cess. US hops that are sold out for this year however, will
pretty much remain that way.

Do you find that craft breweries have been contract-
ing out more hops than required as a response to this
scarcity? Do you see some hops coming back on the
market in 2008 as a result of this?

There is always the hoarding game when a hop is
scarce. We try to be careful when selling to keep this
from happening, but is really difficult to know when some-
one might be doing this. I do think the higher prices, has
put a damper on hoarding to some extent. People have to
think twice when spending large amounts of money like
we are doing today. I have the same problem as I also
have to pay the higher prices and I have to worry now a
little bit about the cash flow and if maybe I am paying too
much and will be stuck with a high priced hop.

Being a smaller brewpub, how do I get my suppliers
to listen to my projected needs, minuscule as they are in the
global market? I get the feeling from the suppliers that
what our needs may be are often not worth bothering with.

Sometimes it must feel like that, but from a personal
standpoint that is not very good business as sometimes
the little pub or the brewer from that pub might become a
large brewer. The problem comes from just being short of
hops and it does have a paralytic affect on how we do
business. It is a lot easier to sell hops when the cup-
boards are full.

This shortage is aging me fast.
Hop shortage charts from Ralph Olson talk

**Graphic #1**

Graphic #1 shows the hop acreage worldwide. The diagram reflects the acreage and the lbs in Mil., with a UK graph (graphic #2) reflecting acres.

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<tr>
<td>Acres</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>US</td>
<td>25,000</td>
<td>42,266</td>
<td>44,161</td>
<td>29,435</td>
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<tr>
<td>GDR</td>
<td>54,409</td>
<td>56,680</td>
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<td>REST</td>
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<td>137,121</td>
<td>105,480</td>
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<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
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<td>236,067</td>
<td>203,538</td>
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<tr>
<td>LBS in. Mi</td>
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<tr>
<td>US</td>
<td>49,053</td>
<td>74,337</td>
<td>74,971</td>
<td>53,814</td>
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<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>75,288</td>
<td>64,239</td>
<td>81,571</td>
<td>62,832</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rest</td>
<td>134,040</td>
<td>130,102</td>
<td>124,021</td>
<td>62,122</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>258,381</td>
<td>268,678</td>
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**Graphic #2**

United Kingdom:

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Acres</td>
<td>53,500</td>
<td>17,000</td>
<td>12,000</td>
<td>7,700</td>
<td>2,400</td>
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**Graphic #3**

Graphic #3, above, shows the reduction of farmers in the hop industry.

**Graphic #4**

This graphic shows the seven most widely planted varieties in the USA and the percentage of total acreage they represent from 2006.
Changes in hop contracting for all breweries

By Jessica Dickinson

As many brewers are aware, every year you had the option of contracting hops just prior to the actual harvest, or to simply purchase hops “off the shelf” from most suppliers. However with the hop shortage in full effect, the ease of both of these options has now dwindled down to almost non-existent. Now, many breweries are requesting quotes for future crops before the current crop has even been fully harvested. Here at Hopunion, we have been bogged down with constant quote requests from our faithful customers; however at this time we are not able to quote as we would like. This process is starting four months sooner than usual leaving the growers less able to estimate the poundage they may be able to deliver, as they are unable to take into account weather, water supply, and pest issues. We wanted to apologize to everyone who has a request already in with us, for the slowness of speed with which we are required to address these requests. The great fear is that if we move to quickly, before getting pricing and availability nailed down with the growers, we could end up doing more harm than good. It is far too easy now days for one simple error to cause major problems for many brewers. Though prices are still high, we want to ensure that our pricing is fair, and that the hops you contract with us, will be here in house once harvest has ended. We, of course always account for a less than average crop year, natural disasters, or even hop fires.

The days of consistently being able to call in for “off the shelf” sales has sadly ended for now, though we hope for its return in the years to come. Contracting has and will always be with the industry and as a rule is a very smart way to ensure that you will have exactly the varieties you will need, when you need them. The biggest key to contracting is to contract for enough hops to see you from March to March every year, as there is no longer an excess of the previous year’s hops to see folks through till the newest crop is ready to ship. The old way of contracting was to set the contracts up from September to September however this can no longer be the case if you wish to have a constant supply of the hops you need. Brewers must keep this in mind when submitting their quote requests. The poundage they will be asking for from the 2008 crop must be able to see them through till March of 2010 to ensure uninterrupted hop supply. Here at Hopunion, we are peddling hops every year all the way through March, and varieties have to be done one at a time, making it a good account for a less than average crop year, natural disasters, or even hop fires.

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By Jessica Dickinson

Hopunion profile #1: Blake Cruzen

Blake was born in Anchorage, Alaska in 1973 and then moved to the Yakima Valley before he was a year old and has made his home here ever since. He attended Naches Valley High School and then completed his college education at Central Washington University with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Accounting. While in college, he had several jobs to help pay for his schooling from janitorial work for the college, forklift driver, Pepsi delivery driver, a long haul semi-truck driver for a hay company in Ellensbug and coaching high school baseball.

Following graduation, Blake’s first accounting position was with the Yakima County Treasurer’s office where he worked for a little over a year before obtaining his first financial position in the hop industry with Yakima Chief, Inc., where he started as the Assistant Controller and being promoted to Controller.

After more than five years with Yakima Chief, Inc., he decided that the daily 90 mile round trip commute to Sunnydale was getting too expensive and tiresome so he took a position in Yakima with US Bank Business Lending as a Commercial Loan Officer. But, he missed working in the hop industry so when he heard of the opening with Hopunion, LLC, he knew it was an opportunity he did not want to pass up.

He started with Hopunion July 2007 as their Chief Financial Officer/Controller and is very happy to be back doing accounting work and most of all being back in the hop industry. Who doesn’t like beer?

Other important aspects of Blake’s life are that he is a volunteer firefighter and EMT for his community fire department for the past 10 years and a high school and college baseball referee for the past 1½ years. Blake enjoys hunting & fishing, a fan of major league baseball, college basketball, football but most importantly spending time with his wife of 11 years, Kim and their two children, Cortissa (5) and Mitchell (3).

Hopunion profile #2: Jesse Umbarger

Jesse was born and raised in Los Alamos, New Mexico and if you ask him he will tell you that he glows in the dark. At age 17 he learned how to homebrew from his uncle who took first place in a state fair brewing competition. From that point on his heart and mind were consumed with the desire to learn as much as possible about the art and science of making beer. As he continued home brewing and pushing the envelope of creative possibilities, he realized that attaining a formal brewing education would be necessary if he were to turn his love for beer into a life time career. In 1996 Jesse received a diploma from the world renowned Siebel Institute of Brewing Technology in Chicago, Ill. Shortly after graduation he got his first head brewer job in Albuquerque, New Mexico where he learned many lessons in how not to operate a business. Over the next 10 years he was the Brewmaster for a number of breweries in New Mexico, Washington, and Oregon. (Rio Bravo Brewing Co, San Ysidro Restaurant and Brewery, Bavarian Lager Celler, Wild Duck, West Brothers, Ice Harbor, and Steelhead Brewing company) He claims to have a PhD in restaurant/brewery operations. After experiencing firsthand the many obstacles and pressures that force small businesses to close their doors, he realized how important finance and accounting are to any business. Soon thereafter Jesse enrolled and graduated from the University of Oregon with a Bachelor of Science degree in Accounting. The day he turned in his last paper and took his last exam, he went home to drink a frothy brew in celebration. As he walked in the door, the phone rang. It was Ralph Olson from Hopunion.... The rest of the story can only be told by father time.
Big QC Day results: Data varies significantly by region

Editor’s Note: Over the next few issues, Craft Beer Quarterly we will take a closer look at some of the results of Big QC Day, a White Labs Inc. beer testing marathon that took place in February and March. The tests collected information on beer from all over North America. In this issue we focus on IBUs and alcohol. Full results are available on the White Labs website, www.whitelabs.com. Read Page 1 and Page 2 for more information on Big QC Day.

IBUs (at right)
The graphic is self explanatory about the bitterness ranges of beers entered into Big QC Day. But there is a lot more beneath the surface. When broken down by regions, the Northwest had the most aggressive beers, with 23 percent of the entries with IBUs of 50.1 or above, followed by the Southwest, 14 percent, the West and Midwest, 12 percent, the Northeast, 10 percent, and the South, 8 percent. By far, the Northwest also had the lowest number of entries with IBUs less than 25 (23 percent). The region with the largest number of entries under 25 was the Midwest, with 50 percent.

Big QC Day alcohol results vary by region

Alcohol (at left)
The graphic shows that the great number of beers had moderate alcohol levels of between 3.1 percent to 6 percent. This is consistent with regional results. However, when it comes to big beers, the Northwest again takes center stage as the home of aggressive beers. Forty-four percent of beers had alcohol levels between 6.1 percent to 12 percent. The Northwest was followed by the Southwest, 34 percent, the West, 33 percent, the Midwest, 28 percent, the Northeast, 22 percent, and the South, 20 percent.
Focus on the new Yeastman:

Yeastman, which could change the way many people procure yeast, is reaching a higher level of development. The system tracks yeast through each stage of development. The benefits are many. This system allows us to provide greater customer service, as we can quickly review a culture’s history when we field questions from customers. We also use the tracking system for testing purposes, such as during the recent Big QC Day (for more read the stories on Pages 1 and 2).

The benefits are more than an in-house tool. We want to offer customers instantaneous information on yeast availability and pricing, including for international customers, and this system will allow us to do so. However, those wishing to order as they have in the past, including by phone or fax or email, will of course continue to be able to operate in this way.

The system, which is still in development, will be shown to attendees at the Craft Brewers Conference in San Diego. The system will serve homebrew stores and professional brewers, although homebrew stores will begin using the system sooner as these customers generally have less customizing in their orders.

So come by the White Labs booth at the Craft Brewers Conference to learn more about this system and how it can help your brewing.

Yeast and Fermentation Notes:

The spiciness and fruitiness of this style is going to come from the yeast strains. A couple of obvious choices are the Trappist or Abbey yeasts. The Abbey is going to be less fruity and a bit more earthy.

The trappist is the most popular, perhaps because people like the fruity aspects of this strain. Both are tolerant of high alcohol levels.

Alternatively, a few people have used our Belgian ale yeast, which is more phenolic but more versatile as well.

It can be used to make other styles such as a Saison or a Wit. These are high-gravity beers, so pitch a lot of yeast and aerate well. If you bottle condition, you will want to use fresh yeast.

— Chris White, White Labs