



Landrace hulless barley 'Jorma'

The hulless barley (*Hordeum vulgare* L. var. *nudum* Hook. f.) is a form of domesticated barley with an easier-to-remove hull. Hulless barley is an ancient food crop and the landrace variety 'Jorma' is the only hulless barley still in cultivation in Finland. This particular landrace originates from at least the 17th century—research shows that seed samples dating back more than 400 years are the same type as 'Jorma'. It is a four-row type hulless barley with a long and weak straw.

'Jorma' is named after the first name of a seed seller who received a small amount of hulless barley, selected seeds, and released it as a commercial variety in the 1970s. Nowadays 'Jorma' barley is registered as a landrace following EU regulations allowing seed production. One organic farm has cultivated it for over 50 years in eastern Finland and nowadays three other farms nearby also cultivate it (location N 62° E 30°).

The amount of flower and other milling output are significantly plentiful compared to barley with hulls. According to the dietary mineral and protein analysis, 'Jorma' contains more protein, starch and beta-glucan than barley with hulls. These nutritional qualities have balancing effects for cholesterol and blood sugar.



Farmer Kalervo Laitinen and 'Jorma' seedlings cultivated to assess germination. Photo: Maarit Heinonen/MTT



Cheese flatbread made from hulless barley 'Jorma'. Photo: Jorma Riikonen

'JORMA' NICHE PRODUCTS

The interesting origin and tested good nutritional qualities are not enough to raise the product to the grocery shelves and to a consumer's shopping basket. A novel raw material or product needs to be introduced to consumers and food producers and they need to be convinced about its quality. The farmer family itself has been active with introducing different kinds of 'Jorma' dishes in local groceries and institutional kitchens, such as in hospitals.

The regional development project of the niche foodstuff has also arranged meetings with those involved in barley processing and use of the product, such as local mills and bakeries. These companies and the family farm have designed and developed the 'Jorma' product line which includes different hulled grains, flours, flakes, but also pies (especially the traditional Karelian pie), unleavened barley bread, cookies and modern vegetarian sausages. 'Jorma' products are also included in the menu of a local restaurant.

'Jorma' barley is nowadays well-known and available in the local market. The challenge is to create a distribution network large enough and have more widescale marketing to reach more consumers.



A small local bakery bakes 'Jorma' niche products: cookies, Karelian pies and flatbread. Photo: Jorma Riikonen

Text: Maarit Heinonen (research scientist, MTT Agrifood Research Finland), Airi Timonen (company counselor, Central Karelia Development Company KETI Ltd) and Shelagh Kell (PGR Secure Project Manager, University of Birmingham)

PROJECT PARTNERS

*The University of Birmingham, United Kingdom
(Coordinator)*

Wageningen UR Plant Breeding and Centre for Genetic Resources, The Netherlands

Bioversity International, Italy

The University of Perugia, Italy

Julius Kühn-Institut, Federal Research Centre for Cultivated Plants, Germany

NordGen, Sweden

MTT Agrifood Research, Finland

The University of King Juan Carlos, Spain

ServiceXS BV, The Netherlands

*The University of Nottingham,
United Kingdom*

*European Association for Research on Plant Breeding,
Switzerland*

WEB LINKS

PGR Secure - www.pgrsecure.org



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