

Title           A new approach, using a text processor, to a computer-based advisory system for malting barley.  
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#### **Abstract**

Several "expert systems" have been developed to assist decision making by farmers and storekeepers during grain storage. The continued decline in the number of professional advisers makes these developments vitally important. However, the costs and time inputs needed to develop a system are considerable and may not always be available. As part of a European Union funded project on the storage of malting barley, a new approach to the development of computerized advisory systems has been used. An encyclopaedia of information was built as a word processor file. Where gaps in the available knowledge were identified, target research was done to provide the necessary data. Hyperlinks were added to enable users to navigate the system quickly and to select specific topic areas. A decision-support system was devised based on primary risk (giving safe storage times before mould develops or germination declines significantly). Secondary risks, giving safe storage times based on the times taken by insects or mites to complete their life cycles, were also covered and a classification of dormancy categories made. The final system was then copied as 'read-only' files onto a CD for assessment. In developing the system, the importance of close contact between scientists and industry became apparent.