

Voluntary Report – Voluntary - Public Distribution

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Report Name: The Virtual Czech Brew Master Webinar Focused on American Hops

Country: Czech Republic

Post: Prague

Report Category: Beverages, Food Processing Ingredients, CSSF Activity Report

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Report Highlights:

FAS Prague and the Beer Academy Czech Republic held the 4th Czech Brew Master webinar at the American Center Prague (AC) on December 1, 2020. The webinar educated 80 participants about American hops and encouraged them to experiment with the ingredient in new combinations and recipes. Due to measures put in place to control the spread of COVID-19, 2020 was a difficult year for the food and drink service sector in the Czech Republic, to which the craft beer industry is closely interconnected. Despite this challenge, the webinar concluded with lots of hope for future growth of the Czech craft beer scene.

General Information

- 1. Event: The Virtual Czech Brew Master Webinar**
- 2. Funds Reservation Number: FAS2020-06002280-CT400010116**
- 3. Event Date: December 1, 2020**
- 4. Event Venue: American Center, US Embassy Prague**

5. Description and Purpose of the Activity

FAS Prague and the Beer Academy Czech Republic co-organized the 4th Czech Brew Master Conference, which was livestreamed from the American Center Prague on December 1, 2020. The event had multiple first-time features: first time held virtually (as a webinar), first time hosted by the U.S. Embassy American Center, and first time highlighting American hops.

Initially designed as a workshop held at a Czech microbrewery, due to COVID-19, the event was switched to a webinar format in 2020. The conference is a networking event for the Czech brew masters' community, and it is a space for them to share their professional experiences. Beer Academy CZ, the education agency for beer makers and the founder of this annual event, selected six Czech speakers to address different topics of the craft beer business.

Jana Pavlisova, the brew master of Genius Noci brewery and a graphic designer by training, presented on how to create and work with a catchy logo and why it is an important marketing tool. Jiri Chroustovsky, the owner of a small Czech microbrewery, provided an economic analysis of various microbrewery business concepts. This includes the concept of "flying breweries," which is when (usually a start-up) craft beer maker leases a beer making technology to brew a limited number of their craft beer recipe batches. Ondrej Husak, the brew master of one of the most popular Czech microbreweries, "Zichovec," covered the topic of craft beer barrel aging. During the presentation he shared his experience using American hops during the aging process. Jindrich Krivanek, the owner of "Hop Products CZ," a Czech hops trading company, talked about specific public varieties of American hops and their availability on the Czech market. Petr Bohanek and Michal Kurec, brew masters from two successful microbreweries, engaged in a conversation in which they shared their experiences and tips on how to correctly make an American-style IPA.

The online webinar was open only to registered participants. More than eighty Czech beer makers from all over the country watched the presentations and chatted via Google Meet. The event was held in the Czech language, with the exception of a brief message from Matt Brynildson, the brew master of the Firestone Walker Brewery, who joined in from California to greet and provide a short message to his Czech colleagues. This interaction was an appreciated follow-up to the American Hops Workshop "Some Like It Hopped" led by Matt in Prague two years ago. Additionally, Matt was scheduled as the keynote speaker at a U.S. hops workshop planned for the 2020 Beer Saloon, a craft beer festival in Bratislava. This event was postponed to 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The webinar educated participants about the use of American hops in brewing. It also encouraged participants to experiment with the ingredient through the creation of new combinations and recipes.

The webinar maintained positive messaging and tone throughout the sessions. This was important as 2020 was a difficult year for the food and drink service sector in the Czech Republic, to which the craft beer industry is closely interconnected. Despite repeated and long-term shutdowns of restaurants and beer pubs, the webinar concluded with lots of hope for future growth of the Czech craft beer scene.

6. Media Coverage:

The activity was featured on the FAS Europe/US Embassy Prague websites and social media (Facebook, Twitter).

All webinar presentations were recorded and posted on the event's Google Drive to allow participants to replay and to fully understand the details for their later implementation. Additionally, the link to the videos was sent to contacts who had expressed their interest but had been unable to watch the live streaming event.

In addition, FAS Prague and Beer Academy made a short video clip with English subtitles which was posted on the Embassy Prague website and Youtube Channel.

7. Contractor and Funding:

FAS Prague co-organized the webinar with Beer Academy Czech Republic. The contractor was responsible for agenda setting, selection of speakers, webinar recording including a video clip production focused on American hops (in Czech), invitations, and registrations. FAS Prague responsibilities included hosting the event at the American Center, U.S. Embassy Prague, providing the on-site technical equipment, logistics, briefing of speakers, and generating feed for FAS Europe/Embassy Prague social media/websites.

Total costs: \$1,026.

8. Expected Results and Desired Outcomes:

The general goal of this event was to demonstrate the uniqueness and value of U.S. high-quality hops. The webinar aimed to encourage local craft beer makers to use U.S.-specific aroma hops to produce American-style beers such as IPAs and NEIPAs. The event took advantage of the very deep beer culture and a large beer-drinking community in the Czech Republic. The Czech Republic ranks first in per capita beer consumption in the world, reaching 143 liters per person in 2019. However, it is estimated that due to ongoing restrictions put in place to control the COVID-19 pandemic (mainly closed restaurants, pubs and bars) and a lack of incoming tourism, beer consumption in 2020 dropped by as much as 28 liters.

Despite a difficult year for Czech beer brewers, they have been very eager to learn how to make non-traditional, heavily hopped beers. In the last decade Czech beer drinkers started to appreciate trying new beer types, particularly top-fermented ones that are very different, in both brewing technology and taste, from a traditional Czech lager-style beer. The statistics report that while in 2012 hops imports to the Czech Republic were hardly noticeable, in 2019 U.S. hops exports reached 43MT.

The webinar amplified the message of the workshop held in Prague in November 2018.

For more detail please refer to the GAIN Reports:

Opportunities Exist for U.S. Craft Beer and Hops in Czech Republic | Beverages, Product Brief, Promotion Opportunities, SP1 - Expand International Marketing Opportunities, Wine | Prague | Czech Republic | August 29, 2018 | EZ2018-3156

CSSF Activity Report - American Hops Workshop | Beverages, CSSF, CSSF Activity Report, Market Development Reports | Prague | Czech Republic | December 20, 2018 | EZ2018-2385

9. Evaluation/Recommendations/Follow-Ups:

Over 80 registered participants, both experienced professional brew masters and hobby home brewers, learned different angles of running a microbrewery business while watching and working with new craft beer trends. The activity highlighted qualities of U.S. hops and provided valuable tips how to use them.

Beer making/drinking has always been an important part of the Czech culture. Although hops are a traditional Czech export commodity, the recent boom of craft beer breweries has opened new niche business opportunities for U.S. aroma varieties. FAS Prague continues to develop very good relationships with the Czech craft beer brewers' community through activities such as the Czech Brew Master Webinar. As a result, FAS Prague has been invited to participate in the Pink Boots Collaboration Brew Day held in a virtual format on March 8, 2021. The new Czech microbrewery *Proud* is the first Czech brewery participating in this event raising the profile of women's roles in the beer industry. Proud's activity for the day includes brewing a Hazy IPA beer special with American hops, both alcoholic and non-alcoholic versions. Additionally, FAS Prague is currently monitoring a possibility of including a U.S. hops promotion on the agenda of the *International Beer Festival* (<http://www.beerseal.cz/>), scheduled for April 2021.

The number of participants and event feedback indicated that American hops present a valuable beer making ingredient and that demand for the product will continue to grow.

Examples of participants' feedback:

“We can see dozens of hops varieties in the market today and they all can be used in countless ways. The webinar provided an excellent summary of most popular hops, but also revealed some secrets how both traditional sorts and new hops can be creatively used.” (*Stern Brewery*)

“The Czech Brew Master Webinar held in the American Center was an excellent opportunity for us to compare approaches of other breweries to the technology, particularly to the dry hopping, with our production. The presentation on American hops provided valuable tips on how to make a high quality IPA. We definitely want to participate in similar activities in the future.” (*Moravia/Lucky Bastard Breweries*)

Post will continue to monitor the Czech hops market and to promote U.S. varieties. Besides the activities mentioned above, the major marketing event in 2021 should be the U.S. Hops Workshop in Bratislava, Slovakia in coordination with the cooperator, Hop Growers of America, and Beer Saloon, the craft beer festival, organizers. The activity is subject to both funding availability and COVID restrictions relief.

10. Post Contact Information

If you have questions or comments regarding this report, please contact the U.S. Foreign Agricultural Service Office in Prague.

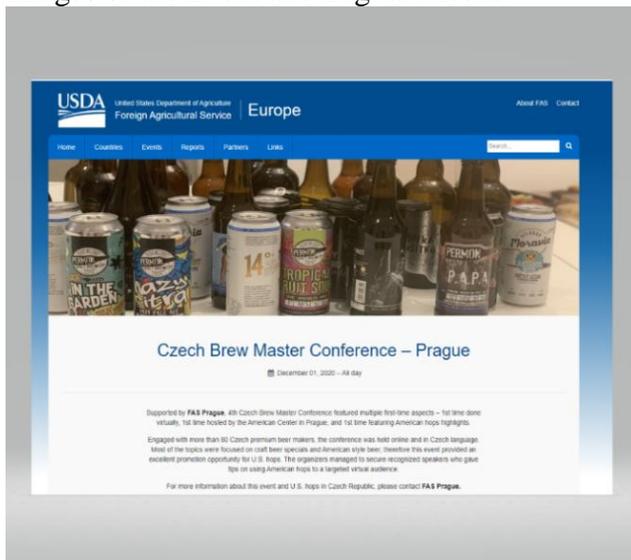
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Images of the Event and Digital Media:





Attachments:

No Attachments.