



## Rising costs hitting local breweries

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Despite the rising cost of production, Olde Main Brewing Co. will be introducing new items to their menu, thanks to deal with local wheat farmers. File photo: Shing Kai Chan/Iowa State Daily

### **Increase in price of hops has encouraged Olde Main brewery to buy local**

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The cost of beer is rising.

Two of the biggest breweries, Anheuser-Busch and MillerCoors, announced price hikes earlier this fall in response to a drop in demand by consumers and an increase in the cost of supplies, although the increase of a half-dollar or so may not be readily noticeable to many people.

But the big companies aren't the only ones suffering from cost increases.

Olde Main Brewing Co., 316 Main St., has been hit with increasing production costs.

Jeff "Puff" Irvin, master brewer for Olde Main, said prices for hops and grain have jumped to three- to four-times the cost they were only three years ago. "It used to be around \$5 per pound of hops; now it's like \$20," Irvin said. "This might not seem like a lot, but pale ales, one of the most popular types at Olde Main, can use 10 different hops to make. The price adds up."

Olde Main deals with some of these price increases by sourcing products locally from growers like brothers Petor and Matt Andrew.

Over a pint of Cyclone Ale with Petor at the bar in 2008, a deal was struck for the pair to provide some grains for Olde Main.

The two came into 60 acres of hobby farm land between Ames and Des Moines and decided to purchase a combine in order to farm wheat. A company, PM Grains, was born in September 2008. They recycled grain shipping bags from Olde Main to make their deliveries.

"All the folks at the Olde Main have been great people to interact with. It is my regular kinda hangout; they have become kinda like extended family for me," Petor said.

Despite the increase in creation costs, sales have gone well so far this year. Last year, Olde Main began selling its beers and root beer in bottles and kegs, rather than just from the tap. This expansion and availability of Olde Main products will likely continue in the future. "I've had other opportunities to expand," Irvin said. "But our time is

already taken up just making what we do.”

As the year progresses, a variety of new and old flavors will be surfacing to tantalize the taste buds of Ames residents — from Pumpkin ale, which maintains the tastiness of a slice of pumpkin pie, to the holiday-themed Reindeer Fuel, which has 45 pounds of Bavarian chocolate involved in its production.

Also proposed are a hard cider and an increase to the line of sodas beyond root beer, possibly orange or strawberry cream-style sodas.

And although input costs may increase, Olde Main is keeping its prices basically the same. Wednesday dollar pint night will continue as advertised. For ISU students like Ian Loomis, sophomore in open option-LAS, that’s great news.

“Dollar pint night is a great time for only a couple bucks,” Loomis said. “It’s one of the things I’m glad I can afford.”

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