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Report Says Crisp Malt Plans to Close Hamburg Plant by March 2027

Industry sources tied the move to weaker Scotch whisky demand, which has left the 110,000-ton facility underused.

Saturday, October 10, 2026



Crisp Malt is reportedly preparing to close its malting plant in Hamburg by the end of March 2027, a move that would deepen the pressure already facing Germany’s malt industry and underline how weaker Scotch whisky demand is spreading through the

European beverage supply chain.

The report, published by trade outlet Inside.beer and attributed to industry sources, said the planned shutdown would affect the former Tivoli malthouse in Hamburg-Eidelstedt. The company has not publicly confirmed the plan. Crisp Malt is a U.K.-based malt producer owned by Richardson International, the Canadian agribusiness group.

If the closure goes ahead, it would remove a site with annual capacity of about 110,000 metric tons. That would matter beyond one factory. Malt is a basic input for brewing and distilling, and the loss of a plant of that size could further reshape sourcing patterns for beer and spirits producers at a time when demand, costs, and trade flows are already shifting across Europe.

According to Inside.beer, a key reason behind the reported decision is the steep downturn in Scotch whisky. The Hamburg plant has reportedly sent a significant share of its malt to Scotland in recent years, where Crisp Malt has long supplied whisky distilleries. But weaker sales and rising inventories have led many whisky producers to cut output, leaving the Hamburg facility well below its installed capacity.

The broader downturn in Scotch has already affected other malt operations. Inside.beer noted that Diageo temporarily suspended production in November 2025 at its Roseisle Maltings in Scotland, a site with capacity of 35,000 metric tons. Around the same time, Bairds Malt, part of Soufflet Malt, announced the closure of its 47,000-metric-ton facility in Pencaitland. Those decisions came as single malt exports from Scotland had fallen 12% in the first half of 2025 and were 40% below their 2022 peak, according to figures previously cited by the same publication.

The reported Hamburg closure would mark a sharp reversal from the expansion plans that malt companies were making not long ago. In April 2024, Crisp Malt announced plans to expand its Portgordon Maltings in Scotland from 42,000 metric tons a year to 162,000 metric tons, with new production then expected to begin in 2027. The change in market conditions since then has altered the outlook for the sector.

Hamburg’s difficulties are not linked only to demand. The site also appears to face structural disadvantages in logistics. Unlike port-based facilities with direct marine loading and unloading, the Eidelstedt plant is located inland and does not have ship-access infrastructure. In a market where bulk transport costs matter, that can leave an older site at a disadvantage against newer maltings better positioned for seaborne trade. Industry sources cited by Inside.beer said the combination of underused capacity and higher logistics costs has weakened the plant’s competitiveness.

The Hamburg site also has a long history in the German drinks industry. It was once tied to Christian Eisenbeiss, the former controlling shareholder of Holsten-Brauerei. When Eisenbeiss sold his controlling stake in Holsten to Carlsberg in 2004, he kept the malting business. In 2016, HEMERA Vermögensverwaltungsgesellschaft mbH, the asset management company associated with the Eisenbeiss family, sold Tivoli Malz and the related GlobalMalt operations in Germany and Poland to British Anglia Maltings, which was then Crisp Malt’s parent company. The Hamburg plant later became part of Crisp’s wider production network. In July 2023, Richardson International acquired Anglia Maltings and Crisp Malt.

Any closure in Hamburg would add to a broader retrenchment in Germany’s malting sector. Producers have been dealing for years with falling beer consumption, high production costs, and excess capacity. Those pressures have led to a series of shutdowns and cutbacks. Inside.beer said Soufflet Malt has withdrawn from malt production in Germany, Boortmalt ended its malting arrangement with Cargill in Salzgitter, Malteurop closed its Heidenau facility, and BestMalz shut its Wallertheim plant.

Taken together, those moves removed about 350,000 metric tons of annual malting capacity from the German market, or roughly 17% of the country’s previous total capacity, according to the trade publication. If Crisp Malt’s Hamburg facility is also closed, the cumulative reduction would rise to about 460,000 metric tons a year, more than 22% of Germany’s former total capacity.

That trend is important for the beverage business because malt demand no longer depends only on beer. Distillers, especially in Scotland, became a major growth outlet during the whisky boom, and that encouraged maltsters to invest and expand. Now the pullback in whisky is having the opposite effect, reducing orders for malt and putting pressure on plants far from Scotland. A closure in Hamburg would be another sign that the slowdown is not limited to distilleries but is also hitting suppliers of grain processing and primary ingredients.

At the same time, Germany’s beer market continues to offer little relief. Breweries across Europe have been contending with changing drinking habits and lower beer consumption, which has reduced malt demand from another major customer base. Maltsters are also still dealing with elevated energy and transportation costs, squeezing margins even when plants continue to run.

Crisp Malt has not publicly confirmed the reported plan for Hamburg, and no official statement on workforce effects, production transfers, or customer supply arrangements was included in the report. But even without formal confirmation, the prospect of another closure is likely to draw close attention from brewers, distillers, grain traders, and logistics operators. For them, the issue is not only one plant in northern Germany. It is whether the recent contraction in malt capacity marks a temporary correction after years of expansion or a deeper reset in the supply network that supports beer and spirits production across the region.