The science behind Pale Ale’s new foam

BEER drinkers will in the new year notice the foam on a local favourite lagers a little longer than usual – and it’s all down to big data.

Coopers this month commenced the first production of its iconic Pale Ale using an advanced brewing process aimed at improving the formation and stability of the beer’s head.

Earlier this year, Coopers partnered with the Data To Decisions Cooperative Research Centre (D2D CRC) and recent Carnegie Mellon University graduate Zhaohan Wang to conduct in-depth analysis of the ingredients, processing methods and other variables that can affect beer quality.

As part of the State Government’s Big Data Connect program, they spent eight weeks developing an algorithm to perfect the brewing process and ensure a consistent final product, including firmer foam that lingers longer.

Coopers brewing and supply chain manager Dr Jon Meneses was tight lipped on the secret behind producing the perfect foam, but said beer drinkers would soon taste for themselves the results of the new processing methods.

“When you pour a beer you want more head that stays there for as long as possible,” he said.

“We focused on our flagship product – Pale Ale – and there are a number of things that can have an impact on foam stability.

“When the data is fed into the algorithm it tells us what relationships exist between the ingredients and the brewing process that allow us to make a nice looking head when the beer is poured.

“It’s less about the ingredients like malted barley and more about how you process the malted barley at the beginning of the brewing process.”

D2D CRC lead data scientist Dennis Horton said the algorithm incorporated the top 10 components of the brewing process that affect the quality of beer.

“Using various machine learning techniques, we were able to interrogate process settings and ingredient characteristics to highlight which features were most important in the processing cycle,” Mr Horton said.

“Given the complexity of the brewing process and the variation in raw ingredients, it can be difficult to know which components have an impact on product quality.”

“By applying cutting edge data analytics on routinely collected data, we were able to formulate valuable insights that will help ensure high quality outputs.”

Dr Meneses said Coopers retained a significant amount of data about its production inputs and brewing conditions, with the potential to unlock that into meaningful improvements to its range of other products.

“We just picked one quality that lingers a little longer, and the secret behind producing the perfect foam is about – the beer making process.”

White House chairman’s job safe: adviser

US President Donald Trump has no intention of firing the chairman of the Federal Reserve, despite his barrages of criticism against the central bank, White House economic adviser Kevin Hassett said on Wednesday.

“Yes of course, 100 per cent,” Hassett said when asked on ABC television whether Fed boss Jerome Powell would keep his job.

Hassett also downplayed jitters over the economic outlook, following plummeting stock market prices.

“All the macroeconomic information we’re getting is that the fundamentals remain extremely sound,” Hassett said, as Wall Street bounced back from its most recent losses.

Hassett said that Christmas-period shopping had been “through the roof” and that the economy was still expanding at a good pace, with “the momentum that we saw this year, carrying over to next year.”

The Trump adviser likewise sought to calm nerves triggered by revelations that Treasury Secretary Steve Mnuchin phoned the chief executives of America’s biggest banks last weekend to check that they have healthy liquidity levels.

The calls apparently meant to demonstrate the White House’s grip on the volatile situation—backfired by sparking concerns that the Government might be worried about a run on the banks.

“Secretary Mnuchin talks to bankers all the time, practically every day and you know, the markets clearly are focused on the downside risk for next year and it’s important to gather information from the normal sources and from informal sources and you know,” Hassett said.

“We’ve been doing that really quite a bit over the few weeks.”

Hassett said that the ongoing budget impasse in which swaths of the Federal Government were working without funding, due to Congress’s refusal to authorise Mr Trump’s demand for more money on a US-Mexico border barrier, would not harm the economy.

“A few weeks shutdown is not going to be something that has any kind of significant effect on the outlook,” he said.

The White House did not respond to requests for comment on reports that Mr Trump was planning to meet with the Fed’s Powell in the near future.

US Fed chairman’s job safe: adviser

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US team visit China during trade truce

A US Government delegation will travel to Beijing in early January for the first face-to-face talks since President Donald Trump and his Chinese counterpart agreed to a truce in their tariff war, Bloomberg News reported on Wednesday.

Deputy US Trade Representative Jeffrey Gertler will lead the US team for talks during the week of January 7, Bloomberg said, citing two people familiar with the matter.

Word of the meeting follows small signs of progress – and the absence of new threats from Mr Trump – while the two sides work to ease trade tensions by March 1. Washington and Beijing have exchanged tit-for-tat tariffs on more than $300 billion in total two-way trade, locking them in a conflict that has began to eat into profits and contributed to stock market plunges.

JAPAN’s Sun Corp is looking to sell up to 50 per cent of Israel’s digital intelligence provider Cellebrite with an Australian company in the running to buy it, an Israeli financial newspaper says.

Sun Corp values the fully-owned affiliate, which specialises in forensics and extraction of data from mobile devices, at $US400 million ($A567 million). The Calcalist newspaper said on Wednesday.

Sun Corp was in talks with a number of potential buyers, including Australia’s Macquarie Group and US private equity firm KKR, it said. Officials at Cellebrite, Sun Corp and Macquarie were not immediately available for comment.

KKR declined to comment.

Cellebrite builds tools which allow law enforcement agencies to rapidly collect evidence from digital devices.

Aussie firm eyeing Cellebrite stake