

SOWING GUIDE TO SPRING BREAK CROPS

TAKE A BREAK THIS SPRING WITH PROFITABLE BREAK CROPS

This is a year when growing pulses as a spring break crop makes agronomic, ecological and financial sense.

Estimates of gross margin potential for 2007 spring crops produced by Nickerson show that peas grown for premium markets, such as human consumption and pet food, compare well with spring malting barley. As an additional financial benefit, protein crops attract supplementary payments through the Single Farm Payment.

The introduction of new varieties, such as Zero4, with improved agronomic characteristics giving very early maturity, short straw, excellent standing ability and good downy mildew resistance will also give the crop a boost.

Pulses have a zero nitrogen input requirement, and at current fertiliser prices, the residual nitrogen benefit from their ability to fix soil nitrogen, works out at a saving of around £15/ha.

Non-margin benefits of pulse break crops include weed control, soil structure and improved drainage - all desirable results for producers growing cereals on long-term rotations. Over-wintered stubbles can also be a major points contributor to the Entry Level Scheme (ELS).

SUMMARY OF CONTENT

TAKE A BREAK THIS SPRING WITH PROFITABLE BREAK CROPS

The reasons for growing break crops and the advantages for farmers.

TARGETING THE CORRECT MARKETS

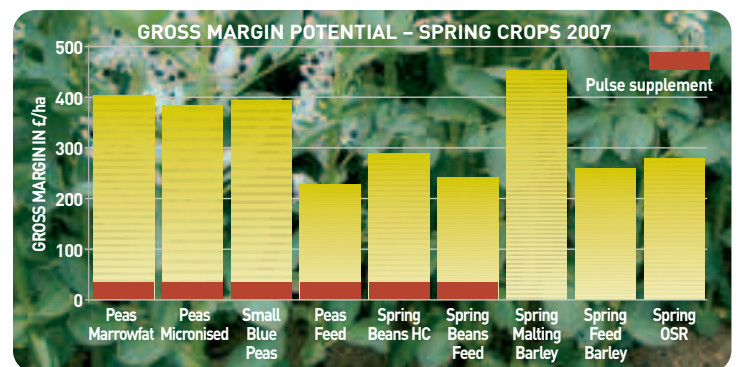
Aim for premium markets as pulses grown for commodity feed markets offer lower return.

CHOOSING THE CORRECT VARIETY

A summary of all the current varieties available from Nickerson.

GROWING SUCCESSFULLY IN YOUR CONDITIONS

Information on sowing conditions, seed rates, and crop husbandry.



TARGETING THE CORRECT MARKETS

Growers need to be sure about the market they are targeting before sowing and should aim for premiums, as pulses grown for commodity feed markets offer lower returns.

In broad terms, the Middle Eastern food market for beans is quite a lucrative one, with significant premiums for good quality human consumption beans above feed. The main buying parameter for this market is the visual appearance of the crop.

For peas, premium value lies chiefly in blue peas for human consumption and pet food



A selection of the wide variety of end products from pulses

micronising, and in marrowfats for canning and export. In addition, there is a small premium market for white peas for use in soups, and for splitting.

For marrowfat peas, growers should aim at the grocery and canning markets. Parameters here include size, variety, and freedom from waste and staining.

Growing more pulses in Britain may also remedy the current EU over-dependence on raw soya imported from the US and South America.

Before sowing, growers must be sure they are selecting the right variety for the right market and, wherever possible, go for premium market outlets.

CHOOSING THE CORRECT VARIETY

BLUE PEAS

F H M



Highest yielding available. Large Blue. Good agronomic characteristics and suitability for premium markets.



SMALL BLUE PEA

Small blue variety with superior yield potential (and agronomic characters) to Flare, similar to Nitouche. Good dark green colour and resistant to bleaching.



Large Blue Pea

Popular large blue pea with consistent performance, good agronomic characters and suitability for premium markets. Good, bold grain size making it the industry standard for micronising.



LARGE BLUE PEA

New large blue with very high yield potential, short straw and good standing ability. Very resistant to downy mildew.



LARGE BLUE PEA

New large blue with very high yield potential, good standing and the highest level of downy mildew resistance available. Grain size similar to Nitouche.



EARLY BLUE PEA

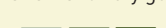
Very early maturing small blue pea with excellent standing ability and short straw.

WHITE PEAS

F



BILBO



straw and very good standing ability.



peas

White feed pea with comparable yield potential to Bilbo combined with improved agronomic features. Good resistance to downy mildew.

MARROWFAT PEAS

H M E



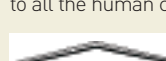
Marrowfat Pea

Marrowfat pea with moderate yield potential, good agronomic characters and excellent quality. Widely accepted in the human consumption market.



Marrowfat Pea

Highest yielding fully Recommended marrowfat on the list with a good combination of agronomic characters and suited to all the human consumption markets.



COMBINING PEA

Well-established marrowfat variety, remaining popular with end users. Good standing ability and ease of combining.



COMBINING PEA

High yielding marrowfat pea with good downy mildew resistance for its class and a large grain size.

BEANS

F E



spring bean

High yielding variety with short straw, good standing and early maturity, suitable for the export human consumption market.



SPRING BEAN

Excellent yield potential (highest on the Recommended List), good agronomic characters and resistance to downy mildew. Bold grain suitable for the premium export market.



SPRING BEAN

High-yielding variety with good standing and early maturity, suitable for the export human consumption market.



SPRING BEAN

Consistent performing variety with very good standing, early maturity but susceptible to downy mildew.



Spring Beans

Proven variety for export now superseded in yield terms but still offering good agronomic characters.

KEY TO SYMBOLS

F Feed

H Domestic Human Consumption

M Micronising

E Export

GROWING SUCCESSFULLY IN YOUR CONDITIONS

ROTATION

Peas and beans should not be grown on any field more than once in every five years to avoid the build-up of persistent soil-borne pests and diseases.

SOWING DATE

Pulses should be sown as early in the spring as practical, provided soil conditions are suitable. Soil conditions at drilling, and the avoidance of compaction in the seedbed, are more important than sowing date. Farmers can accrue 120 ELS points per hectare by leaving the previous season's over-wintered stubble beyond the qualification date of February 14th.

SEED RATE

Aim to establish 40 plants/m² of spring beans, 65 plants/m² of marrowfat peas, 70 plants/m² of white and large blue peas and 110 plants/m² of Zero4 using the following formula:

$$\text{SEED RATE (kgs/ha)} = \frac{\text{Target plants/m}^2 \times \text{TGW}}{\% \text{ establishment}}$$

Field losses are likely to be in the order of 5% for beans and 5–20% for peas, depending on soil type and sowing date.

SEED DRESSING

An inexpensive seed dressing should be used unless downy mildew is likely to be a problem where a multipurpose treatment is advised.

FERTILISER

Pulses require no nitrogen and have only a small demand for P, K and Mg. Frequently replacing the nutrients removed by the crop is adequate.

TRACE ELEMENTS

On lighter soils sulphur may be necessary and peas should be treated with manganese to avoid Marsh Spot.

WEED CONTROL

Pulses are not very competitive and, where soil type permits, a pre-emergence herbicide is frequently used for the early removal of broad-leaved weeds. Grass weeds and volunteer cereals should be controlled with a post-emergence graminicide.

PEST & DISEASE CONTROL

For peas the development of the common pests – pea weevil, thrips and pea aphid – should be monitored and treated once thresholds are reached. Treatment of pea moth is unlikely to be required for crops being grown for animal feed.

The need for disease control will depend on weather conditions during flowering: in wet or damp conditions two fungicides may be required; in dry, settled conditions fungicides are less likely to be economic.

Similarly, for beans, crops should be monitored for weevil and aphid activity. Bruchid beetles are of particular concern, especially where the crop is destined for the human consumption market. Rust and Downy mildew are the principal diseases of beans which may need attention.

HARVESTING

In weedy or uneven crops a desiccant can be used to aid combining – it will not hasten crop maturity – and a number of products are available.



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