



GROWING SOYA

Advantages

- * A low-input break crop
- * Counts as a legume crop for greening
- * Drilled from April to early May, giving ample opportunity to use stale seed-beds to tackle weeds
- * Rotationally compatible with peas and beans
- * A good nitrogen-fixer, offering 70kg/ha of nitrogen to the following crop

Disadvantages

- * Not suitable to grow further north than York
- * Harvesting can be late, stretching from September into October
- * Grows best at altitudes of less than 600m above sea level

Mark Izard has combined his first soya crop near Canterbury, Kent

Soya success after yields impress

By Oli Hill

British soya bean crops are bringing a smile to growers' faces in Kent and Cambridgeshire with early harvest results showing some impressive yields.

After a generally uninspiring cereal harvest, the scattering of soya crops in southern and eastern England have shown yields of 2.2-2.5t/ha.

This year, just over 400ha of soya was planted in the UK and the base market price stands at about £375/t, including a £40/t premium for non-GM beans.

Kent grower Mark Izard gave the crop a go for the first time this year, planting about 34ha in the first week of May.

He told *Farmers Weekly* he was

TYPICAL SOYA GROSS MARGINS FOR 2017

Yield (t/ha)	2.5
Market value (£/t)	375
Total income (£/ha)	937
Seed cost (£/ha)	150
Fertiliser cost (£/ha)	60
Herbicide and fungicide cost (£/ha)	65
Total input cost (£/ha)	275
Gross margin (£/ha)	662

Source: Soya UK. Based on £375/t at 2.5t/hectare yield with full spray programme

pleasantly surprised by the results.

So far, the crop has yielded 2.2t/ha and Mr Izard says it should have a good margin, better than beans or oilseed rape.

The crop was quite straightforward to grow and it is quick and easy to combine, despite the soya stems being pretty tough, he adds.

As soya is drilled in late April

to early May, Mr Izard decided to grow the crop in fields with bad blackgrass infestations where he is able to get multiple flushes of the grassweed in the spring.

"We grew the variety Vilshanka and I'm happy with the crop overall. I expect to increase our acreage marginally next year to just over 100 acres [40ha]," says Mr Izard.

He also grows winter wheat, spring beans and oilseed rape, and has a beef suckler herd at Waddenhall Farm near Canterbury, Kent.

Mr Izard adds that harvest yields have been slightly below the farm average, but quality has been good, with his biscuit wheat variety Zulu giving a good performance.

STRONG PERFORMANCE

Meanwhile, Cambridgeshire grower Will Aldwinckle has just finished combining his third soya crop, which produced a good yield of 2.5t/ha.

Mr Aldwinckle, who farms with his father Bill in Barnack near Stamford, grew about 20ha of the new soya variety Siverka this year on his 220ha farm, which also grows winter wheat, spring oats and beans.

SOYA MARKET EXPLAINED

- * There is a large demand for soya, with the UK importing about 2m tonnes of soya meal and 1m tonnes of soya beans each year, mostly for animal feed
- * The total area grown in the UK this year is about 400ha
- * Soya beans typically contain less oil than oilseed rape at about 20% and small feed compounders tend to use whole beans rather than extract the oil
- * Global soya production is about

200m tonnes/year with about 125m tonnes traded on the world market

- * The soya market is fairly tight, with China snapping up 80m tonnes and the EU buying 30m tonnes a year. The market surplus is small and demand is rising
- * With no stringent specifications to meet, the risk of having a soya crop rejected over quality is low
- * UK prices are about £375/t which includes a £40/t premium for non-GM beans



Will Aldwinckle cutting his third soya crop in Cambridgeshire, yielding 2.5t/ha