

Thinking outside the pod.

With both Large Blue Pea and Spring Bean markets dominated by very few varieties, two independent merchants have joined forces to introduce some alternatives to both markets.

"With our historic links to several Plant Breeders in Europe, we are now seeing some exciting material coming forward in both market areas" says Darrell Clark of Harlow Agricultural Merchants. "Both our company and T Denne & Sons, based in Kent have a strong seed and pulse grain presence in our respective trading areas. Encouraging performance from both Standal Large Blue Peas and Lambada Spring Beans over the last two years has proven the potential of both varieties."

For further information, opportunities and stock seed availability please contact:

Large Blue Peas

Strong demand and a better quality harvest in some parts of the country have renewed grower interest in large blues recently. However, many new or returning pea growers still have memories of prematurely laid pea crops and damage to combines. "As the name suggests, Standal has good standing ability, with harvestability made better by a tall straw holding the crop off the ground at harvest" Says Mr. Clark. "Varieties such as Standal represent the real improvement in pea varieties over the last few years"

Buyers both in the UK and Europe who have seen samples from the past two harvests, have passed favourable comments on the variety, especially with regards to its colour retention and uniform size.

Farmer Testimonials

'Standal showed excellent vigour from the outset and despite the dry late spring season(2009) not particularly suiting peas they continued to put on good even growth, stood well, and with a yield of 2.2ton/acre and bleaching levels of less than 7% they made top grade. We had not grown peas for a number of years and the high nitrogen costs of other break crops made peas look very attractive. We shall be growing again for 2010.'

Essex Grower – Michael Knight

End User Testimonials

'In our evaluation trials from 2004-2007 Standal showed good colour retention, even size and little splitting, they cook and soak well and show good characteristics for canning, polishing and splitting.

Having now seen commercial crops from 2007, 2008 and larger tonnages in 2009 they consistently perform and have wide acceptance amongst our end buyers. We will continue to use Standal while they are available alongside the other mainstream large blue varieties.'

Askew & Barrett Pulse Processor, Cambs

Spring Beans

With the trend for greater spring bean plantings in the east of England continuing, growers are keen to maximise premium potential from the varieties grown. However, with Fuego dominating plantings, some growers are now becoming cautious of relying on just one variety, in case of varietal breakdown in a particular season.

Growing multiple varieties to spread such risks has been easier said than done in the recent past, but with varieties such as Lambada now performing well in the field and being attractive to the end markets, growers now have a credible alternative.

"With strong demand continuing for best quality beans, a reliable supply of produce from suitable pale hilum varieties is vital to secure these valuable markets" says Marcus Coles of Maviga UK Ltd, a major UK exporter of processed packed beans.

"We see the introduction of new varieties such as Lambada to compliment existing ones as hugely encouraging. Foreign buyers need to see that as a supply chain, from grower to exporter, the UK is serious about ensuring supply of best quality produce. Offering the likes of Lambada to the market sends a very strong signal"

Just under 200t of C2 Lambada was planted in spring 2009, mainly in Kent, Essex and Suffolk. Samples from 2009 harvest have confirmed good quality samples at least as good as Fuego, with suitability for the north African export markets clearly achieved.

"Driving forward field performance is key to niche crops such as beans remaining a viable break crop option" says Andrew Bourne of T Denne & Sons. "Good supplies of quality beans to service our growing human consumption markets clearly relies on varietal improvements, thus increasing grower returns."

Both companies intend to heavily promote the variety this spring, with a large proportion of end produce destined for the ever expanding bulk bean cleaning facility of T Dennes & Son in Kent.

"Having grown Lambada for the last three years, both for seed production and commercial markets, I have been pleased with both yield and saleability of the variety. 2008 harvest saw yields average in excess of 5t/ha, with 2009 harvest one farm averaging 5.6t/ha, with spot yields over 8t/ha. If you add to this that we have a ready market for human consumption quality beans locally, Lambada has proven itself to me and I will be planting a further 64ha for seed contracts this spring, with a further 30ha for commercial human consumption markets" **William Thompson, farming 1400 acres in and around Staplehurst, Kent.**


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