

# Sittingbourne Monitor Farm meeting report

Meeting 5: Summer meeting

Date: 22 June 2017

Location: Hempstead Farm, Tonge, Sittingbourne, Kent. ME9 9BJ

For more information, visit: [cereals.ahdb.org.uk/sittingbourne](http://cereals.ahdb.org.uk/sittingbourne)



## Meeting summary – key messages

1. Most farms still rely heavily on subsidy payments to make a profit
2. On paper, soya looks like a very lucrative crop, however a lot depends on its successful establishment and on suitable harvesting weather.
3. Keeping fixed costs under scrutiny and making marginal saving is crucial to ensure positive margins without subsidies.

## Net margin costs for cereals 2016 harvest at Sittingbourne

### Key performance indicators (arable 2016)

BPS payments accounted for 49% of final margin in 2016

	Wheat	Oilseed rape	Winter barley	Peas	Beans
Yield (t/ha)	9.43	2.87	6.40	3.90	5.00
Price (£/t)	131	359	105	208	152
Gross margin (£/ha)	705	497	158	438	543
Fixed costs (£/ha)	888	888	888	888	888
Net margin before BPS (£/ha)	317	109	-230	50	155
Subsidy payment (£/ha)	210	210	210	210	210
Net margin after BPS (£/ha)	527	319	-20	260	365
Cost of production (£/t)	95	309	163	217	174
Variable cost (£/t)	53	174	104	120	98
Machinery cost (£/t)	15	49	22	36	28
Labour cost (£/t)	13	41	18	28	23
Depreciation cost (£/t)	14	45	19	33	25

## Soya vs peas

This year Mark is growing 18ha soya beans for the first time ever. This amounts to 20% of pea area.

- Variety: Silverka
- The seed is inoculated with a rhizobium to promote nodulation
- Soya beans belong to the legume family
- The soya crop was grown after second wheat
- A cover crop was grown and grazed prior to soya drilling
- Sown using Sumo drill
- Seeding depth is crucial to ensure uniformed crop
- Pigeon control is essential during establishment
- Should be ready to harvest in September
- Target yields are 2.5t /ha
- Grown under contract, farm-stored until April 2018



To -date	Soya	Peas
Yield t/ha	2.5	4.0
£ / T	375	200
VC /ha	275	353
GM /ha	662.00	447

### Main husbandry points for growing soya beans

- Get a good seedbed, avoid compaction, conserve moisture
- Sow at 2.5 – 3.8cm into a warm bed from 21 April at the very earliest
- Maximum sowing depth is 4.45cm
- Apply pre-emergence herbicide
- Keep pigeons away for 2-3 weeks during establishment
- Do post-emergence weed control
- Tank-mix a fungicide with the post-em weed control if the field has a history of sclerotinia

## Next meeting

### Dates:

- **8 November 2017** – Farming after Brexit
- **6 December 2017** – Collaboration – does it have a role to play?
- **17 January 2018** – Machinery costing. The right machine for the job
- **22 February 2018** – Diversification and biodiversity

**For more information contact:** Paul Hill, Knowledge Exchange Manager (South East), [paul.hill@ahdb.org.uk](mailto:paul.hill@ahdb.org.uk) or 07964 243699.

**To find out more about Farmbench, AHDB's benchmarking tool, contact:** Emma Nankervis, Regional Benchmarking Officer (South East), [emma.nankervis@ahdb.org.uk](mailto:emma.nankervis@ahdb.org.uk)

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