



Smart farms for the future

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The case for increasing legume production in European farming systems is compelling, and yet European legume production has shown long term decline despite increasing consumption. In 2013 grain legumes were produced on 1.8 M ha of land (less than 2% of the arable area). There is increasing interest from policy makers in supporting increased production of legumes, but to do this effectively we must first understand the barriers, and then come up with smart solutions to changing agricultural practice.

The legume Futures project (Legume Futures 2014) was valuable in demonstrating wider impacts of legume supported cropping systems within farming systems. The use of legumes can help alleviate major environmental risks associated with N loss to the environment and therefore address wider concerns about greenhouse gas emissions, eutrophication and environmental impacts of farming systems. However, the way in which they are utilised influences their effectiveness in delivering these benefits. Some examples of smart approaches to utilising legumes will be provided. Through its network of case studies, the TRUE project offers the opportunity to use these innovative approaches, understand barriers and deliver a step change in the adoption of legume supported cropping systems. This will support policy initiatives and contribute benefits to European farming systems and wider society.

References

Legume Futures 2014. Legume-supported cropping systems for Europe <http://www.elrc.eu/>