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About CERERE

Through a balanced, multivector network of researchers and communities of practitioners, the project promotes innovation by producing and disseminating accessible enduser materials and training products for farmers, food manufacturers, consumers, researchers and policy makers.

GROWING ORGANIC SPELT AND ENSURING A MARKET

PROBLEM

Growing market interest for spelt but practical challenges in growing limits UK supply.

SOLUTION

Innovative sales arrangements have helped finding a route to market for other niche cereals and might be transferable to the spelt market also.

Outcomes

Providing advice on alternative production and marketing strategies will help producers to assess entering the spelt market.

Practical Recommendation

Growing spelt

- Spelt grows under similar conditions as winter wheat, but requires dehulling.
- Autumn sown as the 1st or 2nd crop after fertility building.
- Seed rates of 180-220kg/ha; limited availability of organic seed.
- Several varieties, chosen in consultation with buyer.

Benefits

- Hulls protect the grains and retains nutrients and freshness in storageⁱ.
- It is adaptable to poorer soils and wet weatherⁱⁱ.
- Once established, it grows tall helping to suppress weedsⁱⁱⁱ.
- Potential for high-fibre feed, biofuel or bedding, but processing costs are a barrier to developing these markets.

Challenges

- Variable yield, ranging from 2.5-4.5 t/ha^{iv,v}.
- Dehulling is expensive, especially for small volumes, accounts for 40% loss of weight, but included if grown on contract. Special equipment also for clearing and handling^{vi}.
- Can be slow to establish and compete with weeds^{vii}.



Spelt growing at Sharpham Park in the UK. Source: <https://www.sharphampark.com>

Marketing spelt

- o UK market is limited (approx. 2000 t/year) with gradual increase.
- o 2017 organic spelt milling price ranged from £280-410/t.
- o Lower prices for feed-grade spelt, but no established market.
- o Best grown on contract^{viii}, no established open market for spelt.

Mainly for grown for food market (mainly flour), requires meeting strict quality specifications. Sharpham Park also process spelt for pearling or flaking.

Further Information

^{ii,iv}Neeson, R., (2011). Organic spelt production. Department of Industry and Investment, New South Wales ((Australian publication, but lots of information on growing spelt).

ⁱⁱⁱ<http://www.countryfile.com/countryside/truth-about-spelt>

^vLampkin, N., & Padel, S. (2017). 2017 Organic farm management handbook (No. Ed. 11). Organic Research Centre, Newbury.

^{vi}Gillespie, G. & Forristal D. Spelt Wheat Food Potential, Teagasc.

^{viii}<https://www.theguardian.com/money/2014/may/15/spelt-grain-supplies-under-pressure-high-demand>

Organic Arable - <http://www.organicarable.co.uk/>

Organic Research Centre's Organic Farm Management Handbook 2017. pg. 117, *Spelt wheat*.

Sharpham Park - <https://www.sharphampark.com/>

Project partners

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Evaluation and sharing of the results

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