Who’s interested in growing energy crops in the UK?

Crops for Energy

Where are we now?

- Plantings in England from 2001 under the Energy Crops Scheme

Year / Crop	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	Total
SRC	233	65	94	106	290	391	500	67	127	172	2045*
Miscanthus	0	52	0	302	658	2345	2413	130	441	590	6930
Total	**233**	**117**	**94**	**408**	**948**	**2736**	**2913**	**572**	**568**	**762**	**8975**

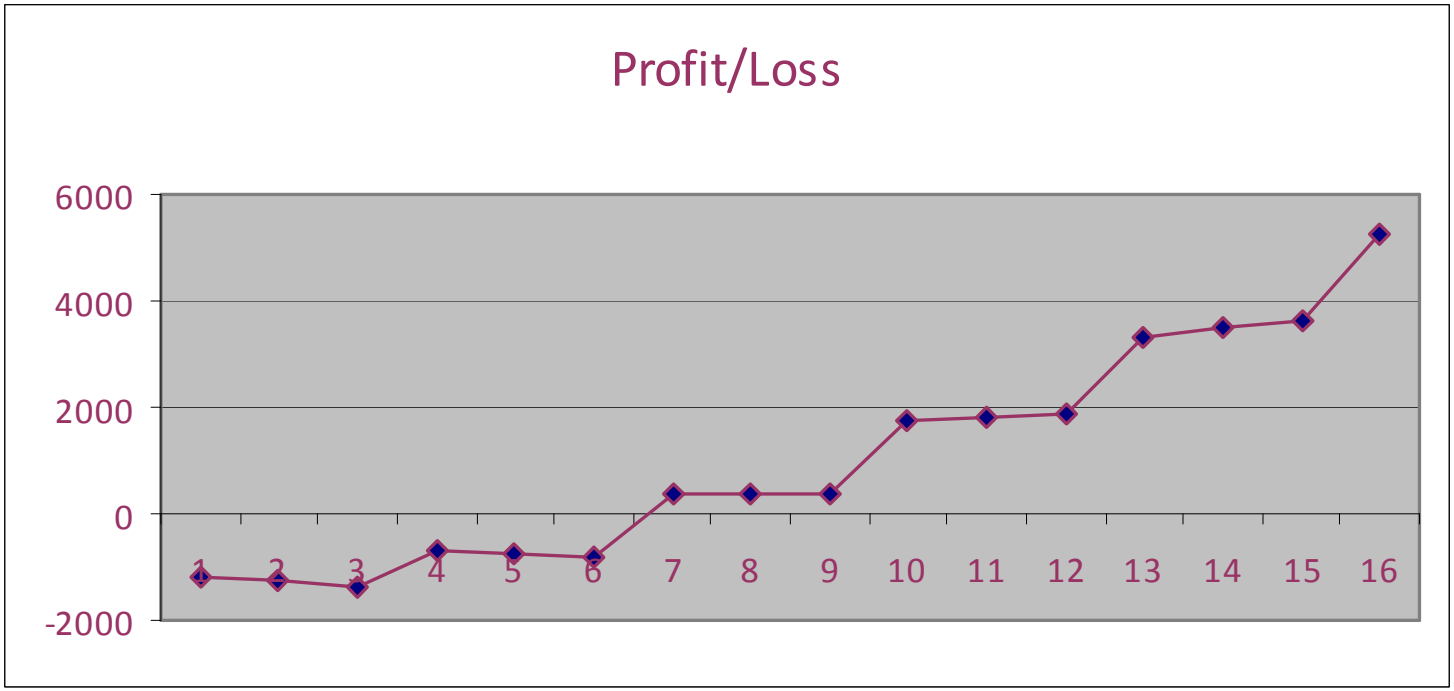
* There is around 3800 ha of SRC planted in the UK as a whole

Why aren't we growing more?

- Risky crop for farmers
- Expensive up front investment
- Poor cash flow in early years
- Lack of assured, local markets
- Perception that there is masses of wood
- Ties up land for long periods
- Might affect land values
- Lack of infrastructure
- Only appeals to a certain type of farmer
- Lack of trickle down

= Risk is too great , rewards are too small

Why aren't we growing more?

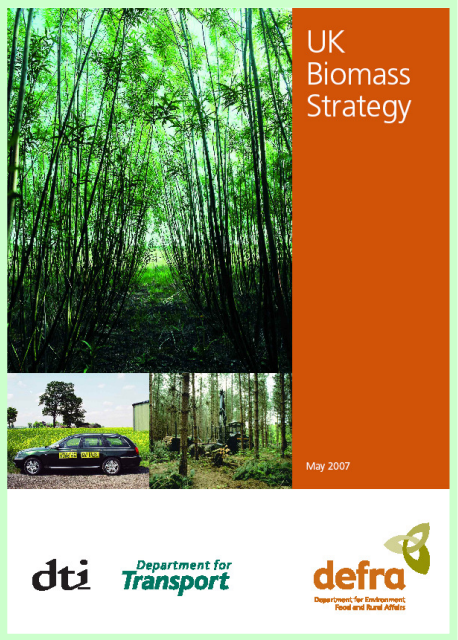


- SRC profit/loss over 5 harvests
- (Medium yields, £60/tonne woodfuel price, includes interest charges)

Future requirements

- 350,000 hectares by 2020
- Up to 4.2 million hectares by 2050

How do we get there?



Opportunities for SRC?

Whose interested?

Growers

- Industrial land owners
  - Waste management companies
  - Water & sewage treatment companies
  - Aggregates companies

Why?

- Suitable land use for brown earth sites
- Better return than grazing
- Economic alternatives to industrial treatment of effluents

End users

- Power stations
- Project developers
- Local authorities
- Breweries
- Airports
- AD companies

Why?

- Incentives e.g. ROCs, (RHI?)
- Reducing carbon emissions
- Help ensure long term security of supply
- Possible use of surplus heat for drying woodchip

Energy Crops Routemap

- Bottom up incentives (rather than trickle down)
  - Annual payments during years 1-6 - smooth out return on investment
- Assured local markets
  - Public sector obligation modelled on Landfill Tax Credit Scheme
- Increase incentives for self supply
  - Remove 3 ha limit for grant
- Improve dissemination of information
  - Requirement of grants – detailed case studies
- Innovation to reduce costs
  - E.g. Reusable rabbit fencing, improved automated planting t harvesting machinery to reduce rutting, etc
- More integrated agriculture
  - Food and fuel – encourage buffer strips
  - More rewards for biodiversity benefits
  - Waste water & sewage sludge application

How scientists can help ?

- Lobbying Governments to stimulate policy changes
  - Provide evidence base
  - Lead to more direct schemes or fuller integration into existing ones (Renewable Heat Incentive, Carbon Reduction Commitment, Water Frameworks Directive etc)
  - **Reduce risk and maximise reward to growers**
- Dissemination of results
  - Enable best practice guidelines for growing, conversion and use
    - Contaminated sites
    - Irrigation with waste water
    - Application of sewage sludge
  - Useful for land owners as well as planners and regulators
  - **Increase opportunities and reduce regulatory burden**

Contacts

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Consultancy/ Training/ Plant supplies/ Turn key management options/ Green solutions

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