

Large-seeded leguminous plants

A protein bomb for your field

Large-seeded legumes are becoming more popular. This is due partly to the rising costs of protein feed and partly to the new greening rules. Protein plants come under the "diversification" heading of greening in the context of crop rotation, and they are also rated with a factor of 0.7 per hectare of arable land as an ecological focus area. However, it is important to bear in mind that the greening rules require

a winter crop to be grown after them in order to prevent nitrogen being leached into areas away from the roots. This is rational, as farmers would not like to do without this gift from the crop. Bearing the market price of soya in mind, it is sensible for farmers to grow their own grain legumes for on-farm use. Grain legumes include grain peas, field beans and the three types of lupins (yellow, white and blue) which

are described on the following pages. Lupin species have a high protein content and also provide free nitrogen. Nodular bacteria can fix nitrogen and make it available in the field to the next crop. When considering growing these crops, it is important to know whether lupins have ever been grown on the land before. If that is the case, a rhizobia preparation should be used.

