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High-value crops of the future: Why native legumes are more than niche crops

Pea, field bean and soya as key building blocks for sustainable agriculture - an example of the further development of young value chains – [Inhouse Farming – Feed & Food Convention 2025](#) on 30 September and 1 October 2025 in Hamburg will focus on algae, alternative proteins, high-value crops and cellular agriculture

The demand for plant-based proteins is growing. However, under purely market-based conditions, their production has so far hardly been profitable for many farms – even functioning marketing models in the form of cooperatives or contract farming already exist. The example of protein crop cultivation illustrates what needs to be considered when establishing new value chains and lucrative marketing channels. In the run-up to the [Inhouse Farming - Feed & Food Convention 2025](#), Stefan Beuermann (coordinator for producer groups in the LeguNet project) and Klaus Martin Fischer (industry expert at the management consultancy RSM Ebner Stolz Management Consultants) will show how the step from niche crops to economically viable high value crops can be organised. The new DLG (German Agricultural Society) trade event will take place from 30 September to 1 October 2025 at the Congress Center in Hamburg. The focus will be on cutting-edge topics such as algae, alternative proteins, aquaculture, sustainable energy concepts, high-value crops, insect breeding and cellular agriculture.

Peas, lupins, field beans and soya are seen as beacons of hope for sustainable agriculture. They improve the soil structure, break through weed cycles and bind atmospheric nitrogen. However, their cultivation has rarely been economically viable up to now. "Without price transparency, farmers lack a basis for planning," says Beuermann. Legumes can only be sustainably established with resilient market structures and cooperation models. Fischer adds: "Legumes offer opportunities – if we think of them as part of a larger, regionally orientated and integrated system."

From raw material to high-value crop: What the market really needs

New market opportunities are emerging in the area of plant-based foods in particular – especially for domestic crops such as peas, which are considered to be low in allergens, versatile and climate-friendly. Companies are increasingly focussing on regional raw materials and offering farmers cultivation contracts. "The market for plant-based proteins is growing rapidly – especially in the food sector," says consultant Klaus Martin Fischer. He agrees with Beuermann: Value creation does not begin with cultivation, but rather with the organisation behind it. Planning security, market transparency and reliable partnerships determine whether niche crops become genuine high-value crops.

Inhouse Farming – Feed & Food Convention 2025

From 30 September to 1 October, the DLG will be organising the "Inhouse Farming – Feed & Food Convention" at the Congress Center in Hamburg. The focus is on topics such as algae, alternative proteins, aquaculture and energy concepts as well as on high-value crops, insects and cellular agriculture.

For more information, go to: <https://www.inhouse-farming.com/en/feed-food-convention>

You can read the full-length expert interview here

<https://www.dlg.org/en/magazine/legumes-niche-product-or-high-value-crops>

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DLG. Progress and sustainability in agriculture and the food industry

The DLG (Deutsche Landwirtschafts-Gesellschaft e.V. - German Agricultural Society), founded in 1885 by Max Eyth, stands for productivity and resource conservation in a sustainable and innovation-friendly agricultural and food value chain. The goal of the DLG is to promote progress through the transfer of knowledge, quality and technology. The DLG has more than 31,000 members, is a non-profit organisation, politically independent and internationally networked. As one of the leading organisations in its industry, the DLG organises trade fairs and events in the fields of agriculture and food technology and tests food, agricultural machinery and farm inputs. With its specialist centres for agriculture and food and the media of the DLG publishers, the DLG stands for independent know-how transfer. In addition, the DLG works in numerous national and international expert committees to develop solutions for the challenges facing the agricultural, agri-food and food industries.

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