



# Energy Crops

A growing opportunity



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## Are you interested in a crop that:

- Can give a better return than arable crops on lower grade land?
- Has a more stable farm-gate price than arable crops?
- Is less intensively managed with low inputs?
- Reduces your carbon footprint?
- You can sell to others for fuel or to heat and power your farm?



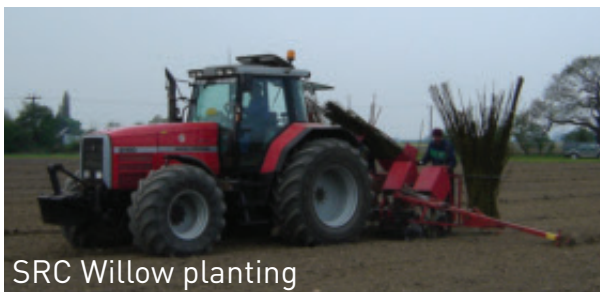
## Have you considered growing woody energy crops?

- Short Rotation Coppice (SRC).
- Miscanthus (a tall, woody grass).

## These crops reduce carbon emissions when used instead of fossil fuels in:

- Power stations.
- Combined heat and power units.
- Biomass heat boilers.





SRC Willow planting

### Woody energy crops:

- Are planted in the spring.
- First SRC harvest is after four years and then every following three years.
- First Miscanthus harvest is after the second year and then every following year.
- Are harvested in winter (SRC) or early spring (Miscanthus).
- Have low inputs over a 15-20 year lifespan.



Mature willow SRC

### Opportunities

Energy crops suit a range of agricultural land. On land with average or lower than average arable yields, the economics of energy crops really start to stack up.

## Calculating the benefits

- The Government-funded National Non-Food Crops Centre's energy crops calculator lets growers compare the gross margins of wheat with SRC and Miscanthus at various wheat yields and prices.
- Try the calculator yourself, using your own farm data to see what return you may get from energy crops. You can find it at: <http://tiny.cc/calculator865>

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## Grant available

- The Energy Crops Scheme offers grants to growers to establish the crops.
- DECC is seeking the European Commission's approval to increase the grant from 40% of the actual cost of establishing the crops to 50%, from 2010.
- Grants are available until 2013.
- You need to apply by 30 September 2009 to receive approval in time for Spring 2010 planting.
- Applications received after September 2009 may not be approved in time for Spring 2010 but we may give approval for 2011 planting.

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Miscanthus planting

## Producer groups

- Some growers prefer to go it alone, others join producer groups to share expertise and equipment.
- Producer groups have contracts to supply biomass fuel to power stations, schools, council offices, businesses etc.
- Contact DECC's Energy Crops team to see if there is a group near you.  
Email: [bio@decc.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:bio@decc.gsi.gov.uk)

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Mature Miscanthus

- DECC will be sponsoring demonstration days in early 2010 to explain about growing energy crops. To receive more information, email your contact details to: [bio@decc.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:bio@decc.gsi.gov.uk)
- Come and see us at the Farm Energy Event, Newark Showground, 25 November 2009. You can find details at: <http://www.farm-smart.co.uk>

## Want to know more?

- Energy Crops Scheme handbook, Best Practice guides, and opportunity maps which give a broad indication of areas suitable for growing energy crops: <http://tiny.cc/energycropsscheme>
- Biomass Energy Centre, the Government's one-stop-shop for advice on biomass fuel: <http://www.biomassenergycentre.org.uk>
- National Non-Food Crops Centre, the UK's Centre for renewable materials and technologies: <http://www.nnfcc.co.uk>



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Baled Miscanthus

**To apply for the Energy Crops Scheme or to talk to an adviser, contact:**

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Worcester WR5 2WZ

Tel: 0300 060 1115

Fax: 0300 060 1125

Email:

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Willow SRC woodchip