

MGA TIMES



Lloyds TSB
Agriculture



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**WANTED
MAIZE GROWERS IN
KENT**

Aran Suddi, from Universal Bioenergy Ltd emailed the MGA Office to ask for our help. The Company is a renewable energy company and are looking for maize farmers and suppliers in Kent to help with their projects.

If any members are interested the contact details for Aran are below:

aran@universal-management.co.uk or phone number (01322 427174).

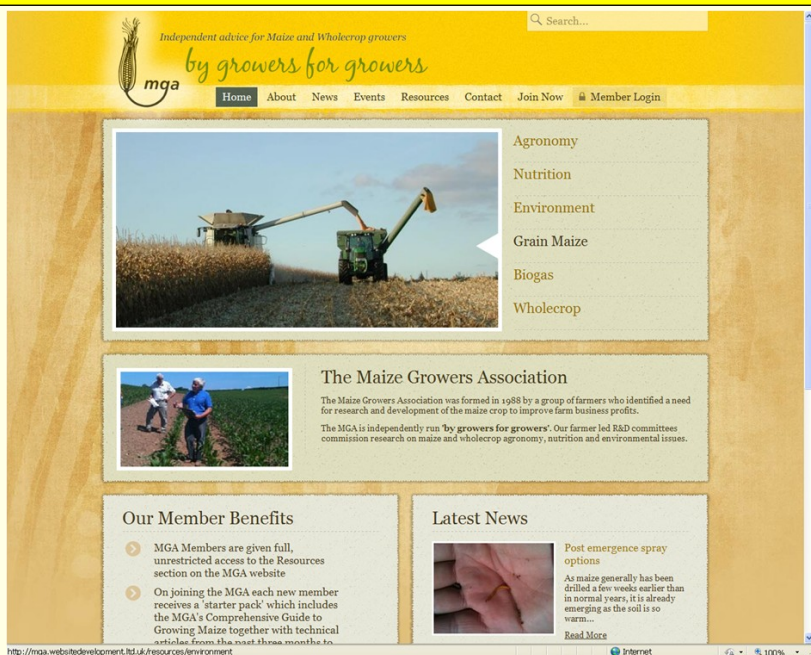
NEW MGA WEBSITE TO BE LAUNCHED

By the time you receive this newsletter we should either have gone live, or be very close to going live with the all new MGA website.

Key changes include:

- a search by key word facility of past publications.
- improved access to technical information.
- timely news updates.
- notification of MGA events.

The web address has not changed so you can still access it from www.maizegrowersassociation.co.uk.



PROFITABLE MARGINAL MAIZE MEETING – SEPTEMBER 20TH



MGA Meeting in Tamar Valley 2009

Tuesday 20th September sees the first of a series of winter maize meetings. The Profitable Marginal Maize Meeting will be held in Clawton, nr Holsworthy and will focus on Maize Eyespot (a real issues in this area) as well as marginal maize growing agronomy and maize under plastic. This event will also include an update on the planned Environment Agency crackdown in the Tamar Valley on environmental issues.

We have further meetings planned around the country over the winter. Titled “Top Ten Tips for 2012’s Maize”, the meetings will focus on making the most of maize, by careful attention to detail in all that you do. More on dates when we have confirmed them.

HOW DO WE DEAL WITH STARLINGS, CROWS AND PIGEONS?

The ongoing conflict between birds, particularly starlings, pigeons and crows and maize silage continues and in an effort to address the dirty question, the MGA are planning to hold a members only event in early November. The meeting will be addressed by Natural England, a vet, affected farmers and hopefully a representative from the proofing/scaring industry. The meeting aims to provide a forum for all interested parties and to come up with

some practical and positive advice. More information will follow, however, if members would like to discuss the issues and learn more about the meeting in the short term please call the office.



MGA HARVEST GUIDE 2011

The key element of this mailing is the updated 2011 MGA Harvest Guide. The guide summarizes the most current information we have on harvesting maize crops successfully and for the first time contains sections on Corn Cob Mix and Biogas maize. The publication can only touch on the key subject areas and we would urge members to contact the office to discuss issues in more detail with either the office team, Simon Draper and or Chris Savery.



DAIRY EVENTS

The MGA will again look forward to welcoming current and perspective members to our stands at this years autumn Dairy Events. At the European Dairy Event in the National Exhibition Centre (NEC) we retain the same site as last year.



For the South West Dairy Show, held at the Royal Bath and West site, we have made the move to the Edmund Rack Pavilion, where we hope to be in the thick of the business stands. Please come along and say hello and even better, bring along a farmer who should be a member, so that we can sign them up.

MGA HEAD NORTH OF THE BORDER (WELL ONLY JUST!)

October 7th will see the MGA council (the farmer committee who run the MGA) head to Crichton Royal Farm, Glencaple Road, Dumfries, as guests of SAC farm manager Hugh McClymont. After the MGA Council meeting the day before, we will then stay on



Farmers at Hugh's meeting in October 2010

Masstock
SMART FARMING

MAIZE MASTER drill after maize

- 50% diploid Italian ryegrass
- 50% tetraploid Italian ryegrass

- Big** 1st cut in May then back into maize
- OR** 3 cuts then into arable
- Can keep for 2 years unlike Westerwolds
- Soaks up surplus N
- Reduces soil erosion
- Sow at 14 kg / acre

For further details contact Brendan Paul 07767 310454

for the second of Hugh's very successful twice yearly maize events, where the numerous variety demonstrations including grain and silage maize with and without plastic will be discussed.

Letters to the editor!

Please find below a letter from David Beever, a longstanding MGA member regarding TMR feeding of beef cattle. If like David you have a view that you feel should be expressed, please let us know and we will do our best to give it some space.

Richard Keenan & Co
Borris
Co Carlow
Ireland

Dear MGA Editor

Total mixed rations (TMRs): A more considered viewpoint.

In his **RUMINANT TECHNICAL NOTE – APRIL 2011** Simon Marsh makes some good points regarding the need to optimise beef cattle performance at a time of unprecedented high feed prices if money is to be made. He rightly places considerable weight on Feed Conversion Ratio but fails to mention how better nutritional management can bring improvements in this important index of technical efficiency and profitability. But his section on Total Mixed Rations delivers a highly confusing message and is wide of the mark in respect to what many farmers are achieving.

He first refers to 'anecdotal evidence' of the performance benefits of TMR feeding to beef cattle, adding that 'most of this is promoted by the manufacturers of mixer wagons'. In both aspects he is correct. As one of those 'manufacturers of mixer wagons' we advocate TMR feeding of beef cattle based on the volumes of evidence of the benefits. But then to state that he was 'not aware of any scientific peer reviewed published research work highlighting the benefits of TMR feeding' shows somewhat less awareness of the scientific literature than he claims.

In a peer reviewed paper in The Irish Journal of Agricultural and Food Research (Vol 42, p201-16, 2004), Cooke et al from University College Dublin reported on feeding 60 Charolais cross heifers for 110 days a ration of grass silage (23%), maize silage (15%), cereal-based concentrates (59%) and straw (3%, all dry matter {DM} basis) as individual feed ingredients in a trough (CONTROL) or as a total mixed ration (TMR). A third treatment comprised a high concentrate (95%) with chopped straw (5%) ration fed as separate ingredients in a trough (HC).

At slaughter TMR fed cattle weighed 18kg more than CONTROL cattle (gains 1.30 v 1.13kg/d respectively), an increase of 15%, whilst HC fed cattle weighed 13kgs more than TMR cattle (gain 1.41kgs/d). TMR cattle ate just 4% more DM than CONTROL cattle whilst HC cattle consumed 10% more than TMR cattle. These data provide clear evidence that TMR feeding brought substantial gains in daily weight gain and Feed Conversion Efficiency (FCE) over trough feeding of the same feed ingredients, whilst it is noted that the high forage ration (48% silage DM) fed as a TMR achieved a similar FCE as the HC ration. This is an important added outcome from the study. Interestingly this study doesn't feature in Mr Marsh's article.

Instead he refers to research at The Grange Institute (also in Ireland) which compared trough with TMR feeding of grass silage and concentrates (at two levels) to Continental X Friesian steers. Here no differences in performance between the two feeding systems were noted leaving the authors (Caplis et al, The Irish Journal of Agricultural and Food Research (Vol 44 p27-43, 2005) to suggest it was probably due to only grass silage being fed in their study compared with grass and maize silage in the study of Cooke et al.

I can't buy this argument and suggest the cause of the noted response difference between the two studies lies elsewhere. Cattle showing improved performance were fed a TMR which included straw, with a Keenan FP100 diet feeder. In contrast, the study reporting no benefits of TMR feeding did not define mixer type, but I strongly suspect a different type of mixer was used, whilst definitely no straw was added to the ration. Thus, despite being conducted at different locations in Ireland, these 2 studies provide important confirmation that both mix composition and the provision of Physically effective fibre are key drivers of beef cattle performance. Interestingly both are these are key market differentials for Keenan and many of our customers will testify to the benefits they have seen with their own cattle.

I can only conclude that Mr Marsh's final comment 'TMRs are not necessarily the answer, but are required with large scale feedlots and for alternative feeds' is not correct. It has been repeatedly shown that well-mixed TMRs, balanced for both chemical and physical nutrition, bring significant gains in animal performance and profitability to beef farmers, both useful at a time of high input costs and eroded margins. Ration structure with appropriate levels of physically effective fibre is the basis of the recognised and highly successful Keenan Mech Fiber system for beef cattle.

Prof David Beever