

# MGA TIMES



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## DORSET MAIZE CHARTER

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Maize Charter project. The Charter, funded and supported by Catchment Sensitive Farming and Wessex Water, has involved farm visits to undertake an assessment of the individual maize fields, with a view to providing site suitability and maturity group advice.

The aim is that by identifying higher risk fields (those that pose a greater risk of soil and or water runoff into environmental features or third party property) and growing suitable maturity maize varieties or other more suitable crops, the problems associated with late harvested maize can be minimised. The assessment used is that available to all MGA members in the MGA Recommended Variety Booklet (sent to members in early January). Based on the response to 9 questions, each field is given a score that directly relates to the most suitable maturity group to grow. The charter has provided a really good test for the assessment tool, which has stood up well to the scrutiny.

### Dorset Maize Charter Facts and Figures

Number of Farms Visited	10
Fields scored	119
Maize area scored (assuming 6 ha fields)	714 ha
Maturity Scores - range	6-13
Fields with cover crops	70% (approx)

Post harvest management - In addition to site and maturity group suitability advice, the on farm opportunity was taken to discuss post harvest management of maize stubbles. Charter farmers are asked to commit to actively managing their maize stubble, either via post harvest cultivation, or some from over winter/cover crop or both.

**Conclusions** – We were delighted how well the assessment tool results corresponded with our own and the host farmers own assessment of individual field risk. During the visits, it was also pleasing to see how committed the participating farmers were to the concept of post harvest maize cover crops, with crop choice and establishment techniques proving much food for thought.



*Antony Butler examining his post maize harvest established cover crop, during the farms Maize Charter visit.*

It was also good to see how the various undersowing and post harvesting cover crops have performed at Brian Chandlers Moreton farm (discussed in more detail in last month's mailing).

Members keen to learn about the Maize Charter can contact John Morgan at the MGA office.

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## MGA CONFERENCE REVIEW

Analysis of the feedback forms from this year's MGA conference in Peterborough pleasingly backs up our own assessment of how well the conference was received by the 120 or so delegates from across the industry who attended. Particularly pleasing were the speaker ratings and subject level. All the papers presented are available on the Members section of the web site and we would urge those not able to attend to go and take a look at what was an excellent and wide ranging programme.

As always we are grateful to our conference sponsors, Syngenta and Bock.



Not only for their financial support, but also for the prompting to up our game. As a consequence, the conference was videoed for the first time and following some editing, we hope to make this available soon.

We would like to thank all those who contributed, including the Companies that bought along their stand, the Short & Sweet presenters and all who attended the conference.

## 2017 RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

Within this mailing you will find a review of the 2016 MGA research and development programme along with guidance as to how to get hold of the full trial reports. The 2017 MGA small plot research programme has gone out to contractors for tenders and commercial members for product inclusions. We hope to be commissioning contractors to undertake herbicide, fungicide and cultivation research and are delighted to be testing more varieties with and without under film once again during 2017.



*Applying digestate to the Gayton Trial, Norfolk 2016.*

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## N PREDICTOR REMINDER

In the Agronomy article in this mailing, Simon mentions using the MGA Nitrogen Predictor to help you assess the fertiliser needs of your maize crop. We have sent out blank forms in the last few mailings, but if you have lost your copy, please do not hesitate to contact Jean in the office, who will send you another via email.

Simon also talks about the importance of the correct soil temperature to get the maize plant growing. We are going to put the soil temperatures on the MGA website soon. At the moment we have a few temperature recorders sending in their information, either weekly or daily. 2 from Devon, 2 from Somerset and 1 Suffolk and 1 Norfolk. If you do record soil temperatures' please could you send me your results so that I can include them on the website. The more the merrier!



### Last word:

As you will see from the review of the 2016 trials, we were able to fund a few extra trials, focusing on research into AD varieties, value of digestate and benefits or otherwise of foliar feeds. We wouldn't have been able to organise and carry out these trials without the help of MGA council members, Neil Groom, Oliver Knowland and Innes McEwen.

While we are on the subject of thanks, the MGA office team are very grateful to John Jackson and his team at Severn Trent Water for hosting a successful training day run by Simon Draper last week.

With over 20 attendees, Simon had his work cut out to answer all the questions thrown at him. We would also like to welcome three new members who joined the MGA as a result of the training day.

Mike Wilkinson, MGA Nutrition advisor has asked me to give you his email address, as he isn't always available to answer the phone.

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