

# MGA TIMES



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**Mole Valley  
Farmers**

## MGA CONFERENCE—23RD FEBRUARY 2017

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It's that time of year again and here in the MGA Office we are starting to organise the 2017 MGA Maize Conference. As the last two years at the Peterborough Arena were so successful, we have decided to hold the conference there again in 2017. We are also delighted to introduce two new event sponsors, Syngenta and BOCK UK.

Contained within this mailing is the programme for the conference. To book your seat please fill in and return the reply slip. Please do all you can to encourage your neighbours and or clients to come along to what we hope will be a very informative and useful event.

As a way of a further incentive we thought a little about a couple of our speakers may be interesting.

MGA attendance at the European maize meeting in France during September provided our first speaker.

Dr Katrin Gerlach is a researcher and lecturer at Bonn University where her work is focused on Ruminant Nutrition and Forage Conservation. Having studied agriculture at the University of Bonn, Katrin went on to undertake her PhD at the same institution between 2009 and 2013. The subject of her PhD was „The aerobic deterioration of silages from chemical composition and dietary choice of goats“.

Katrin presented an excellent paper in France, which focused on the impact of harvest DM%, hybrid choice, harvesting/conservation techniques and time on the resultant silage quality and meat and milk production. We have asked Katrin to build on her European Maize Meeting presentation at our meeting in February, with the aim of providing practical points that can be used on farm during 2017 and beyond.



*Dr Katrin Gerlach*

Our second speaker is a case of second time lucky! Poul Hovesen was on our early programme last year, but unfortunately he suffered ill health and was unable to be with us. We are delighted that Poul has recovered and will be at the 2017 conference talking about his farming system, with a focus on catchment management.



*Poul Hovesen*

Poul left his native Denmark in 1987 to join Sir John White's Norfolk estate as farm manager. During the 28 years that Poul has worked for the Salle estate the farming operation has grown from 1000 hectares to just over 2000 hectares. In 2005 the Salle estate took on the management of an 900 hectare Polish arable estate, north west of Gdansk, and following its purchase in 2012 has continued to build on its reputation as a premium producer of seed potatoes.

In 2011 Poul joined the Holkham Farming Company as the Director of Farming and is developing the in house farming operations on this iconic Norfolk estate in the ownership of the earls of Leicester.

Poul has a continuing interest in long term sustainable agriculture and works closely with the University of East Anglia, BBRO and Agritech east on a number of projects in this area.

Awarded the Sir Timothy Colman prize for his contribution to farming food and the countryside in 2014. Poul was also awarded the prestigious Farmers Weekly awards of Arable farmer of the year in 2014, together with the overall farmer of the year award in the same year.

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## MGA NUTRITION TRAINING DAYS

Please find included in this mailing an invitation to two nutrition days being run by Prof. Mike Wilkinson the MGA Nutritionist. Mike is an animal scientist with over 40 years experience of silage, as a research worker, adviser, teacher and livestock farmer. Mike has written several key publications on livestock nutrition and forage production and joined the MGA team following the retirement of Chris Savery earlier this year.

You have a choice of venue and we are very grateful to Mark Roach from Grosvenor Farms, Cheshire and Joe & Sam Foot from Higher Ashton Farm, Dorchester for hosting these events.

Based at a local meeting room, following introductions Mike will lead the group through 4 sessions, as set out below. While some of the discussion will take place in the meeting room, the plan is to spend time on farm to review the practicalities of feeding livestock.

### Session 1. Removing silage from the silo

Safety. Risks, policy, procedures.  
Causes of aerobic spoilage – top layer, feed face. Changes in silage composition and feed value.  
Mycotoxins. Formation, effects on livestock.

### Session 2. Mixing feeds

Mixing sequence – silage, (straw), pre-mixes, liquids.  
How to avoid sorting – chop length, shredlage.  
Chew per bolus (target 55 to 65), chewing index – 30 min/kg DM eaten.

### Session 3. Diet formulation

NDF and fibre requirements  
Least cost v best diet for the cows' health  
Choice of supplements.  
Environmental impact – carbon footprint of feeds.

### Session 4. Assessing success and failure

Point feed efficiency; annual herd feed efficiency.  
Indicators of unbalanced diet (e.g. cud spitting, matted coat, urine drinking, mineral consumption, very thin or very fat cows).  
Faeces composition. Liquidity, large particles.

The training day will have a 10.00 am start and will conclude with a hot lunch. Plenty of time for questions will be slotted into the morning's activity.

We are already taking bookings for both events, so don't delay and send back your form. Please include your email address so that I can give you final details on the meeting room/Pub.

## SILAGE ANALYSIS PACKS

With so much talk in this months mailing about silage quality, don't forget to order your silage analysis packs from the office. Results are returned promptly to allow you to alter the rations quickly if needed.

To order your silage analysis packs please ring the MGA Office. 01363 775040.



### Last word:

While thanking Syngenta and BOCK UK for their generous sponsorship of the conference, we must not forget our main MGA sponsor Mole Valley Farmers, who for the last few years have helped us to run the MGA for members. With the fluctuating prices for milk and so many dairy farmers either retiring or cutting costs, the MGA have sadly lost some long standing members. We have gained quite a few AD members though. So Mole Valleys support has been invaluable.



The weather this summer and autumn have been marvellous for maize harvesting in the South West and hopefully in your area as well. It is very pleasing to see so many maize fields either drilled or cultivated, to prevent runoff this Autumn. There are still some in the neighbourhood who haven't though. I know some of the farmers aren't MGA members!

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