

MGA TIMES

WITH THIS MAILING

- Cheaper diets without losing output?
Chris Savery

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Diary Dates

The first of two MGA meetings, which Charles Moore referred to in the last MGA Times, has been organised to take place at MGA member Dave Munday's farm (Crediton, Devon) on Tuesday 14th January 2003. Dave will host a farm tour and discuss his 'Maize and Graze system'. Our ruminant consultant, Chris Savery, will also be speaking on how to 'maximise your forage energy.' The meeting will be held in the afternoon from 1.30 p.m. until 4.30 p.m.

This will be followed by an evening meeting to take place courtesy of The Orchard Veterinary Group in Glastonbury, Somerset, with partner Martin Green MRCVS. The theme of the meeting will be fertility and nutrition (energy from forages), with a guest linked to the practice speaking on the fertility aspects of veterinary work. Chris Savery will also be present to focus on energy from forages (grass silage, maize silage and wholecrop silage). The meeting will commence at 7.30 p.m. in the practice conference room.

Further details of both meetings will be sent to members in due course but we wanted to give you the date for your diary.

As Charles also mentioned, the MGA's two conferences (Maize and Wholecrop) will take on a fresh approach and farm visits will be included; member Andrew Shakeshaft's farm for the Wholecrop & the Royal Agricultural College farm for the Maize. The dates for both have been fixed. The Wholecrop event will take place on Wednesday 5th February and the Maize event on Wednesday 26th February 2003.

WATCH THIS SPACE FOR FURTHER DETAILS IN FUTURE MAILINGS.

SMITHFIELD SHOW

MGA to attend Smithfield

We were approached by the RABDF to exhibit at the Smithfield Show this year as part of the new Technical Dairy Feature being launched jointly by Smithfield and the RABDF; the theme of the area is breeding, feeding and the latest technology.

This will be the first time MGA has exhibited at Smithfield so it will be interesting to see what kind of response the show brings.

Noelle will be manning a small stand (shared with BIAC to cut costs!) with the help on each of the days (Sunday 24th – Wednesday 27th November) of David Christensen, Simon Draper, Sarah Harrison and Ruth Baker respectively.

The stand, number 367A, will be located on level 2 of Earls Court, London and we would be delighted to see any members who may be attending the show.

MGA R & D PROGRESS

Crimped maize grain 2002. Update from

Tim Gue, *MGA R&D Chairman*

This is the third season that we have combined maize and ensiled the moist crimped grain that will become a major energy concentrate in our cow rations. We still have much to learn, particularly on variety choice. However, we have consistently achieved yields of between 3 and 3.5 tonnes dry matter per acre. The crop is grown as a break crop on light to medium soils in arable situations. It is harvested in November with a combine with a snapper header; the grain is then crimped, treated with acid and ensiled in a small clamp.

On the positive side: -

1. Costs per tonne are marginally lower than wheat.
2. Produces a feed superior to wheat.
3. Processing costs similar to caustic treating cereals or rolling dried cereals.
4. No drying costs and saves storage space in the grain drier.

The negative points are: -

1. Harvesting can only be done with a specialist header.
2. Grain Maize for crimping (typically 60-70% dry matter) is ready around 1st November, this can jeopardise establishing the following wheat crop.
3. Eyespot - the crop is much more vulnerable to Eyespot as it is in the ground later.

Eyespot can prematurely ripen the crop, which may be good but is associated with yield loss and brackling (lodging), which makes it harder to harvest.

Variety choice is important, some guidance is available in the MGA variety booklet, however try to minimise the Eyespot risk. The factors are: -

- Try not to follow maize with grain maize, especially grain maize with grain maize (too much infected material is returned to the soil).
- If you must follow maize with maize plough it as early as possible to a good depth, and try to choose a variety that is less susceptible to Eyespot (ask Simon). In low risk situations first maize crops may not pose a problem.

MGA/BGS MEETING

Another Successful Sussex Meeting

The 'Making the Most of Your Forages' meeting held last month was once again a huge success, with almost 80 farmers attending. Commencing on the farm of William Goodwin, who has 600 Friesian cows housed all year and fed on the American system plus 350 heifers all fed on grass and maize, and followed by a mini-conference with papers from Sue Clement of HSBC (MGA sponsor) on foraging for profit, Chris Savery on feeding wholecrop, maize and grass and Sarah Harrison on the additive work undertaken for MGA at CEDAR, the day was rounded off with a presentation from John Blamire, head of the Rother Valley Project, who discussed the effects of maize and autumn harvesting on soil erosion and wash.

Feedback proved that the meeting was beneficial to attendees. Further details of all papers are available on request from the office.