



MAIZE GROWERS ASSOCIATION

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To whom it may concern,

Re: Maize Seed Dressing Availability to UK maize growers

We, the undersigned, write to provide background information on what we feel is an important issue, the importance of which is increasing as time moves forward. We finish this letter with a clear question which we hope CRD will push to make a reality.

The area of forage maize grown has risen significantly since the 1980's. The bulk of the maize is stored as silage for either ruminant feed or anaerobic digestion feedstock. In the region of 227000 ha's of maize was sown in 2021 resulting in over 10 million tonnes of maize silage being harvested.

All UK sown maize seed is treated and packed by the breeders in Europe and imported to the UK in sealed bags containing 50,000 or 45,000 seeds sufficient to drill 0.5ha. There are currently 3 seed treatments that can be applied to maize on the continent, including seed exported to the UK

Redigo M is a fungicide from Bayer and is applied to all imported maize seed-(except organic/untreated), to prevent seed rotting in the soil.

Korit 420 FS is a seed treatment with a bird deterring effect, critical for good establishment in most areas. Korit is applied to at least 95% of imported seed. We understand that the licence for Korit is currently being reviewed in Europe and at the time of writing, it is not known whether an extension to its licence in Europe will be approved.

Force 20 CS, from Syngenta is a more expensive enhanced insecticidal seed treatment for the control of wireworms and-also has some activity as a bird deterrent. It is only used where soil pests are expected to occur, following long-term grassland or stewardship scheme options.

In the UK, the MGA encourages early drilling of maize in April to facilitate an early harvest in September so that a cover crop of grass or winter cereals can follow. Early harvest also reduces the risk of harvest related soil erosion into watercourses. Timely establishment of cover crops will reduce the levels of nitrogen leaching, stabilises soil, increases subsequent soil workability and importantly improve biodiversity.

Protection of seed against fungal disease is important to allow early drilling as it significantly reduces the risk of seed loss in challenging weather and soil conditions.

The use of a bird deterrent is also critical to successful maize establishment and using a seed-based deterrent is the most targeted and effective solution.

Without both the fungicide and bird deterrent, maize growing would be more challenging and we would see a loss of productivity and production efficiency on the majority of UK dairy and beef farms as other, less energy-dense, less consistent, feedstuffs would have to be fed during the winter period when grazing is not possible.

We understand that none of these three seed dressings are on the UK Pesticides Register as all maize seed has all been treated in Europe by maize seed breeders for at least the last 25 years. There is currently no great desire by the UK maize seed agents to become involved in the treating and packing of maize seed in the UK, they wish to continue to import treated seeds direct from the European breeders.

It is our understanding that the EU exit transition period rules state that after the end of December 2023, all pesticides used in the UK must be approved on the UK register. None of the maize seed treatments licenced for use in the EU are currently licenced for application and use in the UK

While we fully recognise the pressures placed on yourselves because of Brexit and the Covid Pandemic, we feel it important to register our concerns as to the lack of seed dressing options available either for imported seed or for UK treatment of maize seed post December 2023.

We therefore write to request that CRD do all that it can, with some urgency, to facilitate the ongoing importation of treated seed to both growers and researchers in the UK post December 2023.

Finally, I would offer that if I and/or other signatories to this letter can provide assistance, that may speed up process, that you please do not hesitate to make contact.

We look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely