

MGA TIMES

Maize Growers Association

April 2022

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MGA Conference

A massive thank you to all who registered for the conference this year. We were cautious regarding COVID so opted for online sessions again which were, as expected, extremely successful both in attendance and also in information shared between experts and listeners. We had over 140 members and non-members register and over 70 attending each day. Others were sent recordings of the event. Next year, we are hoping to return to our face-to-face conference format and are excited to see you all again!

Farming rules for water statutory guidance link

On 30th March, DEFRA released a statutory guidance note explaining how to apply the Farming Rules for Water (FRfW) practically. This information should be used by yourselves and fellow farmers to ensure that you are adhering to the FRfW and will also be referred to by the Environment Agency (EA) when assessing whether or not to take enforcement actions when investigating a farm. Put simply, if you are following the instructions listed in this new guidance, you will be well on your way to being compliant with the FRfW. Here is a link to the website: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/applying-the-farming-rules-for-water/applying-the-farming-rules-for-water#contents> or you can search 'Applying the farming rules for water' online and follow the link to the DEFRA March 2022 page. If you do not have access to the internet or are struggling to find/understand this page, we would be happy to help over the phone or via post.

Undersowing Contractors

As we approach drilling, you may be making decisions as to whether you would like to undersow later in the season. Last year we released a list of undersowing contractors and we intend to do the same again this year. To this end, if you are an undersowing contractor or know of someone that is and that would like their details to be available to MGA members, please email the office with a business and/or contact name and relevant contact details, along with the area covered.

N Predictor

It is not too late to complete an N predictor form. We have been manically working through them here in the office and have been sending out a variety of recommendations for 2022 maize fields. We use information from your previous cropping, manure/fertiliser applications, and drilling and harvest plans to draw up a recommended figure for the amount of inorganic N that you would need to apply to satisfy crop demand in the coming season. If you have any questions or would like a paper, digital or spreadsheet version of the N predictor data entry form, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Mineral Price List

Our latest mineral price list is included in this mailing. Normally the prices run for the quarter however these are given for **April only** due to supply uncertainty. We will keep you updated with prices beyond April as and when we receive them in the office. Please also note that lead times are a challenge at the moment so assume 14 working days for the foreseeable future. Mole Valley and the MGA thank you for your understanding at this time.



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Soil Temperatures

It is that time of year AGAIN! We would like to collect soil temperatures for the next six to eight weeks to guide those of you unsure when to drill. As it is already April, we will be reporting soil temperature readings on Mondays and Thursdays. Please do send readings through whenever you have them but note that they will not be emailed until the following Monday/Thursday. I will need your address/region, soil temperature, and depth of measurement and time taken if not 5cm at 9am. Here is a quick overview on measuring soil temps, please contact the office if you require more details.

When: 9am, as often as you like! **Where:** Your soon-to-be-maize field, same place every time. **How:** Use a soil thermometer to measure the temperature at 5cm deep (if you have a weather station that measures to 10cm deep please still send your recordings—I will make a note when reporting them). **Why:** Because drilling should take place when soil temperatures have reached 8°C+ for a week or more.

Readings will be sent out via email so if you are not on our email list please contact the office with your email address so that we can include you.

Soil Sampling and the South West Trial Site

The MGA have secured use of and funding for a trial site in the South West again this coming year. Wessex Water and CF Fertilisers have kindly agreed to support this site designed to trial treatments that are being worked on in our trials further East but with different soil fertility, rainfall and temperatures. Trials will include a nitrogen curve, N-inhibitors, starter fertilisers, mechanical weed control (this trial will include some maize and beans plots) and undersowing, but this year we will be opting for non-grass species.

To kick off our trial site plans, earlier this week Sarah visited the Shepton Mallet site to look at the cover crop in place at present, speak to our host, and take soil samples for both a standard P, K and Mg soil analysis and a soil nitrogen analysis. The standard soil analysis was quick and easy to do and was sub-sampled into a small box which has been posted to NRM for analysis. If you would like to do the same for your field(s) please contact the office for sample and postage boxes. Slightly more complicated was the soil nitrogen sampling. The sample needed to be approx. 60cm deep (or as deep as the topsoil if less) and kept refrigerated from collection to posting. The analysis will tell us the amount of nitrogen currently available but also the amount that will become available to the crop this growing season based on the nitrogen content of the organic matter in the soil.

We will keep you updated with our progress as the trials progress and hope to share our findings with you at the conference next year.



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