

# MGA TIMES

Maize Growers Association

December 2021

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## CONFERENCE SAVE THE DATE(S)!!

### 22nd February and 8th March 2022

**Time and place:** The conference will be held over two mornings, two weeks apart, to best fit in with your busy farming schedules. They will run from 10am until 1pm with a short comfort break part-way. We have opted to run the events via video conferencing software again due to the excellent turnout last year, convenience for those of you that live further afield, and unpredictable COVID guidelines. We intend to record the sessions so if you are interested but cannot attend on the day, please do sign up so that we know to email the recordings to you.

**Subjects:** As always, we have a great variety of speakers booked in for the 2022 Conference. Subjects that we intend to cover include:

- Mechanical weed control in maize
  - Farming Rules for Water
- Measuring soil nitrogen levels
  - Weather modelling
    - Soil carbon
- MGA trial results 2021
  - Farmer speaker

**Booking:** Please email the MGA office to book your conference place. We will then post or email the papers to you prior to the event and send the Zoom links to you. Please note that there is a £10+VAT charge per member, or a £30+VAT fee per ticket for a non-member. If you choose to sign up to the MGA as a new member when booking your ticket or within one month of the conference, we will deduct the £30 fee from your first membership year.

#### BASIS and NRoSO Points

You are entitled to BASIS and NRoSO points for being part of the Maize Growers Association. The codes to claim the points are as follows:

**BASIS: CP/112494/2122/m**

**NRoSO: NO469460f**

Please note that these codes are only valid until 31st May 2022. After this, we will be issued with a new code.

#### Cover Crop Photo Competition

The deadline is looming! Please email your photos to us by 28th January. There will be a prize (kindly gifted by **Grainseed**) along with the opportunity to have your photo and name on future publications and social media posts. If you have any questions, please email the MGA office.

#### EMM Papers

We have had some requests for copies of the European Maize Meeting papers so I would like to remind you that they are available but are large files so please request copies. The subject this year was mechanical weed control and we have been lucky enough to secure a very exciting speaker from the EMM to talk at the conference in Spring 2022.

#### Merry Christmas from the MGA Office!

The MGA phone line will not be monitored from 24th December until 4th January however emails will be picked up sporadically between these dates.

The MGA Office Team, Council and Advisors would like to wish you all the best for the festive season and a Happy New Year! We look forward to working with you in 2022.



## Soil Carbon Testing

*John Morgan comments on points learned from recent Soil Carbon event and initial results from Carbon Challenge soil samples.*

The arrival in recent weeks of the first soil test results from participating farmers in the MGA Carbon Challenge coincided with my attendance the Monitoring Soil Carbon event run by the Soil Carbon Project. Both the sample results and training event have allowed me to take my first steps into understanding soil carbon. Key to my improved understanding is how challenging taking a representative sample can be. Consistency in sampling is key. Whenever samples are taken, you must stick with the same time of year in the future. Spring and Autumn: when samples can be physically taken, soils are moist and soil biological activity is high are the best times of year for sampling. The more representative the sample the better so the standard W shape is the minimum requirement. To quantify soil carbon held at depth, minimum 30 cm deep samples should be taken where possible. The recommendation is to assess soil carbon every 3-5 years via repeat sampling. Bagged samples should be refrigerated before prompt dispatch to lab remembering that Soil Organic Matter, the key element of soil carbon, is 'alive' with bacteria, and that chilling and rapid analysis will reduce the 'deterioration' of the sample. Your sample will be analysed either via the lower cost, Loss On Ignition (LOI) basis, which will be adequate to monitor in-field, on-farm fluctuations in SOM and Soil Carbon over time or by the more expensive, more accurate DUMAS technique. Results generated using DUMAS are more comparable between soil types and should be used for alkaline (chalk) soils. The advice is to stick with the same lab year on year to ensure analysis protocols do not vary and therefore confuse the results. A rough estimate of soil carbon percentage can be calculated by halving the soil organic matter %. In effect SOM is said to be 50% soil carbon. Use the DUMAS system if accuracy is your key priority. Soil carbon testing is complicated and impacted by many variables. Consistency in sampling, analysis method and lab used is important if meaningful results are to be achieved.



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**UNIQUE PRO TRIPLE ACTION**

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- ✓ Aids Establishment

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## Variety booklet

Included in this mailing is our latest variety booklet. You will spot a few new pages this year. Firstly, we have included a pull-out N predictor form in the centre of the booklet for you to complete and then post or scan and email back to the office. The N predictor service is free of charge to members and gives a recommendation on the amount of inorganic fertiliser that will be required on each of your maize fields.

You will also note the manure nutrient content page towards the back of the booklet. This gives an average figure for nitrogen, phosphate, potash and sulphur content for some commonly used manures. These figures can be used when preparing a nutrient plan if you have not had your manure analysed.

As with previous years, we have only published the first-choice maize varieties; if you would like to see the list and qualities of the second-choice varieties for 2022, please contact the office. Alternatively, we will soon be putting them on our website.

If you have any questions, comments or feedback on the 2022 variety booklet, please do not hesitate to get in touch. We are always interested to hear how you use the variety booklet and what you might like to see more of. In addition, if you would like a digital copy of the booklet, please email the MGA office.