

MGA TIMES



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2007 Conferences Latest News

The 2007 conferences will be split and held at separate venues.

The wholecrop conference will be at Harper Adams College in Shropshire. The College has successfully hosted the event in the past and has a real link with wholecrop R & D. The conference theme will be **HEALTHY WHOLECROP**. Speakers already booked include Dai Grove-White, head veterinary lecturer at Liverpool University and two working farmers.

The maize conference, will include an update on biogas, as well as farmer speakers talking about how they incorporate maize into their farming systems. Simon Draper will be on hand to talk through last years research results plus other topical maize issues.

Invitations and final programmes for both events will be out soon. So watch this space and pencil in the dates to avoid disappointment.

AFTER THE LORD MAYORS SHOW!

After a trial run at the Lord Mayors parade in London, this CLAAS combine harvester with maize header travelled back to attend the MGA Grain maize event at Elveden, Suffolk on 16th November.

Despite the A11 being closed due to a serious accident, there were eventually over 50 attendees present. After an introduction from our sponsors, the HSBC Bank, the subjects covered included varieties suitable

for grain maize and maize agronomy by Simon and Ruth (MGA Agronomists). David Mathias from the HGCA gave a researched insight into the markets for grain maize followed by Ian Robertson, Elveden Farm manager, who gave a farmers perspective of the crop. The afternoon session was to include a demonstration of the combine harvesting grain maize, but unfortunately due to horrible weather this was not possible. Neil Groom from Grainseeds Ltd gave the audience an overview of the methods of drying the grain (A resume of his paper is included in this mailing). Arable farmers looking at the markets for growing grain maize also have opportunities to sell the grain to livestock farmers, Frans de Boer, MGA member and crimping contractor explained and demonstrated the crimping method of preserving the grain. The crimped grain can either be clamped, baled and wrapped or Ag bagged. If selling to a livestock farmer it can be taken in bulk lorries to the other farm and crimped there. The MGA would like to thank all the speakers, the Companies that had stands in the Hall and especially Ian Robertson and Elveden Farms for not only hosting the event but organising the facilities and giving up precious time to make this a successful day. We would also like to welcome Alvan Blanch (Grain drying specialists) as new members of the Maize Growers Association.



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**PUT THESE DATES
IN YOUR DIARY**

**WEDNESDAY 7th FEBRUARY 2007
WHOLECROP CONFERENCE @ HARPER ADAMS**

**WEDNESDAY 21st FEBRUARY 2007
MAIZE CONFERENCE @ VENUE to be confirmed**

SILAGE ANALYSIS

Included in this mailing are two very timely technical notes from Chris Savery. With this having been a very difficult year to produce good quality forages, it is even more important to know the quality of your winter feed. Chris explains the ranges of figures you are likely to find on your analysis report and what they mean. The variable quantity and quality of this winters forage is also challenging and Chris once again points us in the right direction.



2006 HARVEST UPDATE BY JOHN MORGAN

As a follow on to the pre harvest review carried out in August we have again been in contact with our focus farmers to see how in fact crops did turn out. Yields were, as predicted in August, 5-10% lower than average in most areas. The summer drought is likely to be the key reason. Those with heavier, more moisture retentive soils appear to have fared better and those with particularly dry land being hardest hit. Lower yields mean lower stocks going into the winter. To fill the gap some have taken late silage cuts while others have purchased "forage extender" to eek out home grown forage. Silage quality is reported to be normal with DM's of between 30-32% and starch and energy levels being similar to average. Green plants with mature cobs at harvest has resulted in some silages appearing to be wetter than the analysis may indicate. Some reports of very high starch levels have also been received. Taking all things into consideration it appears that maize crops have performed well, although a general reduction in yield continues to put pressure on winter forage stocks. Very little forage will be left over at the end of the winter and in many cases the making of sufficient silage next season will be vitally important.

MGA VARIETY BOOKLET 2007

Please find enclosed within this mailing your copy of this flagship MGA publication. While containing the all important variety tables, the book also contains sections on variety selection from an agronomic and animal nutrition perspective. The booklet also provides an update on SMUT and Diabrotica. You will see that we have included, as a separate insert, results for this years candidate varieties. Candidates haven't been trialled for the required years and are therefore not officially recommended. We have included them as a guide to what to look out for next year.

NVZ Farm Loading Reduction

Please note the farm based organic manure nitrogen loading limit for arable land within NVZ's reduces from 210 kg/ha to 170 kg/ha on the 19th of this month (December). Please note that this does not alter the field maximum (250 kg/ha) or bagged maximum (crop requirement).

WEBSITE OF THE MONTH

This month's recommendation is the link to the MANNER site from which farmers can obtain a copy of this practical piece of computer software. MANNER is a decision support system that can be used to accurately predict the fertiliser nitrogen value of organic manures on a field specific basis. MANNER has been developed using results from the latest research, funded by DEFRA, on organic manure utilisation on agricultural land. Access to the site is via the following address.

www.adas.co.uk/manner

WHAT IF? FROM THE MDC

The concept of using Neutral Detergent Fibre (NDF) as the basis for determining feed intakes and as result feeding systems, is the key concept of the latest initiative put forward by the MDC via the What if? Program, to "help dairy farmers plan their future profitable business strategy".

The workshop, using software sourced from Australia and adapted for UK conditions, challenges farmers as to the options available to them to alter their farming system and ultimately improve profits.

The key assumption is that the manipulation of feeding systems and production levels using NDF has the potential to increase the margin over a farms "core" costs (those that tend to rise or fall directly depending on cow numbers). The great strength is the opportunity to explore different business scenarios, hence the name What if?

Farmers keen to use the software attend a 3 day workshop details of which can be obtained from the MDC.

www.mdcfmp.org.uk/ . Feedback from those attending so far has been really positive.



For more information, please consult your Masstock contact or call Brendan Paul on 01280 848848