

MGA TIMES

Maize Growers Association

February 2022

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N Predictor

It is the time of year again where you may be considering how much bagged nitrogen you will be applying to your maize field. As always, we are here to make your job slightly easier (and hopefully more profitable) by offering our Nitrogen Predictor recommendations. Enclosed in this mailing is an N predictor data collection form. If you would like a recommendation for inorganic N required by your 2022 maize crop, simply fill this form in and email or post back to the MGA office (email address can be found in heading of Times). We will use the data that you send over, along with our assumptions, developed over years of MGA trials, to calculate how many kilograms of N you need to apply to satisfy crop requirements. *You will also have found this form in the centre of your 2022 variety booklet so please use either version and save one for next year! If you would like an Excel version instead, please email us.*

Carbon Challenge Update

We have received all but two soil samples back from the first round of the Carbon Challenge Soil Carbon testing! We will be compiling results soon ready to report our starting figures for the fields in question. Soil sampling proved hard work in places, as we endeavoured to sample to 30cm deep, but we feel confident that we have an accurate representation of the carbon in those fields on the day of testing. We intend to provide regular mailing updates to you on the activities occurring in each field, as well as host a variety of farm visits over the next four years addressing cultivation and cropping techniques which may improve soil carbon levels.



Call for help!

We had success with growing maize and beans together last year but are concerned with the lack of weed control available. If anyone has any theories on how we can control weeds either chemically or mechanically we would welcome your thoughts!



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Soil Testing and Sustainable Farming Incentive

The government are opening a new scheme for applications in Spring 2022 called the 'Sustainable Farming Incentive' (SFI). The aim is to improve soil, environment and livestock health. It will use some of the money saved from the reduction in BPS payments and will be open to anyone with 5ha or more of land and eligible for BPS. At present there are four 'standards' being made available. These are Arable and Horticultural Soils Standard, Improved Grassland Soils Standard, Moorland and Rough Grazing Standard, and the Annual Health and Welfare Review. The two that we are focusing on are the soils standards. A requirement of both of these standards, at both the introductory and intermediate levels, is to carry out soil organic matter (SOM) testing at least once every five years on the fields included in the scheme. SOM is any material that is now or once was living and is found in or added to the soil, for example roots, incorporated stubbles, straw in manure, decayed weeds, etc.

Testing involves collecting soil samples and sending them off to a lab, where they will do the analysis and then send results via email. For the most accurate results, you will need to sample to 30cm deep using a soil auger, however this is not always achievable so aim to sample at a consistent depth across the field, to a minimum of 20cm. Take 20-25 samples per field in a 'W' shape avoiding any anomalies such as soil around water troughs, under trees, and in bogs. Send the sample off to the lab as soon as possible. Beware that organic matter will begin to break down once your sample is collected so results will become less accurate the longer the sample is kept; keeping it in the fridge will slow this down but is still not ideal.

To make soil testing more accessible, the MGA have set up an account with NRM. They are offering reduced rate analysis to MGA members. **If you would like soil sample and postage boxes for any kind of soil sampling: standard (pH, P, K, Mg) and/or SOM, or would like to know what other analyses are available, please email the office.** We will post you everything you need to submit a sample, you simply take the soil sample, post it off, and we will send over the sample analysis results once we receive them. The cost per sample for standard nutrient testing will be £10.50 and for standard plus SOM £17.50.

To find out more about the SFI, search 'sustainable farming incentive' and use the DEFRA/GOV.UK or AHDB websites. If you have any questions about soil or forage sampling, contact the office.



EXAMPLE

Contact : MAIZE FLOWERS ASSOCIATION	Client : MR A FARMER HILL FARM FARM CLOSE AB12 3CD
Please quote the above code for all enquiries	
Sample Matrix : Agricultural Soil	Laboratory Reference Order Number
Date Received : 05-Mar-21	Date Reported : 10-Mar-21

SOIL ANALYSIS REPORT

Laboratory Sample Reference	No	Field Details Name or O.S. Reference with Cropping Details	Soil pH	Index			mg/l (Available)		
				P	K	Mg	P	K	Mg
123456	1	FIELD 1 No cropping details given	7.3	2	2-	4	19.6	153	241
12345	2	FIELD 2 No cropping details given	7.4	2	2-	5	22.4	173	259
1234	3	FIELD 3 No cropping details given	7.5	3	2+	5	26.8	187	283
123	4	FIELD 4 No cropping details given	7.7	3	2+	5	32.4	203	280

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