

MGA TIMES



Lloyds TSB
Agriculture

MGA 1988 - 2008 (so far!)
20 years of independant advice for farmers



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Agriculture

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In this Issue

- ◆ New DM recommendations for forage maize—John Morgan.
- ◆ Maize silage additives—Chris Savery.
- ◆ Catch cropping after maize—Simon Draper.
- ◆ Fertiliser requirements for winter cereals—David Munday.

NEW MGA ADVICE ON TARGET DM OF MAIZE SILAGE

Briony Lennox has been funded by the Gordon Newman Trust Award to research various aspects of maize production and harvest, looking particularly at European countries with similar climates to the UK. Her research has led the MGA to the conclusion that UK recommended dry matters at harvest are too low. John Morgan has compiled a very useful technical note from her research and it is enclosed in this mailing.

The note also describes the milk line test for Dry Matter, this is the preferred method of testing in most of the other countries. Many farmers wives will breath a sigh of relief and a lot of microwaves will survive to live another year!! We will be producing a pocket size, laminated and illustrated guide to take out in the field to assess maize DM for this years harvest.

For those that suffer from this disease, there is clearance to use off label flusilazole (which means it's your risk). Flusilazole – trade names Capitan, Genie, Lyric or Sanction applied at 0.8 l/ha at the 10 leaf stage does, (from work in Ireland) give excellent control of this disease. The MGA are doing some trials this year with various fungicides. The results will be published later in the year.

MAIZE EYESPOT



WHOLECROP WINTER WHEAT DRY MATTER % GUIDE

With wholecrop silage harvesting imminent and probably some barley already harvested, we have produced a guide to winter wheat wholecrop harvest and how to judge dry matter percentages. If like us at Town Barton, you have wheat and maize, now is the time to access the maize crop to estimate how well it may yield. If it looks as though it may be inadequate, you have the opportunity to choose a good wheat crop and wholecrop it.

DM%	Crop colour	Grain texture
32 - 35	Green	Soft Brie; some grains milky.
36 - 38	Green	Soft Brie.
39 - 42	Green, ears turning yellow	Soft Cheddar.
43 - 46	Green going yellow	Soft Cheddar.
47 - 54	Yellow, hint of green	Hard Cheddar, with some harder grains.
55 - 65	Yellow, hint of green on stem	Hard Cheddar, with some grains impossible to penetrate with thumbnail.
66 - 70	Yellow/brown, traces of green at nodes	Very hard, with grains impossible to penetrate with thumbnail.
71 - 80	Yellow/brown	Too hard to penetrate with thumbnail; loosening in daytime.

AXE/TAW River CATCHMENT MAIZE MEETING REPORT

Mid June saw the newest members of the MGA in the Tamar and Axe catchments meet up again to review the third of the six on farm demonstrations with Simon Draper and John Morgan. You will recall that this project, based in two vulnerable south-west catchments, and funded by the Catchment Sensitive Farming scheme, aims to increase farmer awareness of good maize agronomy and as a result, reduce the negative impact of maize growing, be it sediment or nutrient loss on water.

This month's focus was the use of starter fertiliser on different maturity class varieties as well as the potential of plastic to increase yields and shorten the growing season. A bonus at The events was the presence of Brendan Paul from Masstock, who kindly provided the seed for the demonstrations.

Of most note was the response to starter fertiliser of different maturity varieties. Early maturing varieties seem to have coped well with less or no starter fertiliser, which was in contrast to the later (very late in some cases) varieties, which showed a considerable positive response to additional help. As an aside all the talk of fertiliser on maize prompted discussion on Nitrogen rates for the crop, with farmers in North Devon in particular leaving with the view the more accurate recommendations and as a result, applications for individual fields may pay dividends.

Maize under plastic demonstrations focused of the establishment success of different varieties as well as their ability to puncture the plastic. Clear varietal differences were noted with the higher content of lignin in the growing plant being cited by Simon as the reason for greater plastic penetration. Inevitably the costs and opportunities for weed control were also discussed at length.

The next meeting in the series, during the third week of July, is set to focus on weed control and the options to keep herbicide use down to a minimum.

CEREALS EVENT 2008

The MGA stand at Cereals 2008 was well visited by members and also non members. This year we featured the MGA Nitrogen Predictor, which, not surprisingly with the price of Nitrogen these days, caused a great deal of interest. With a laptop on hand we were able to process some results. Many people were surprised at how little nitrogen they needed, others disappointed that they should have used more! A few new members were signed up during the two days.

The windy conditions tested our marquee to the full and at times we had to enlist the help of visitors to hold on the poles.



I was quite relieved when the time came to dismantle the stand.

It was very noticeable walking around the show that the stands attracting the most attention have either huge expensive pieces of equipment, or are serving food and drink, unfortunately we had neither, but we still attracted good numbers, perhaps they were waiting to see our stand blow away across the Lincolnshire countryside.

The MGA team would like to thank Simon Draper and Ruth Baker for manning the stand with Jean on Wednesday and to John Jackson for his help on the Thursday.

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For more information, please consult your Masstock contact or call Brendan Paul on 01280 849133

sciantec
analytical

Silage analysis pricing for 2008/2009.

As with everything these days the cost of our silage analysis service is increasing. It is still very good value for money and the results are forwarded promptly. This year Sciantec Analytical are adding a new service for sampling crimped maize.

Analysis	Price/sample (ex VAT)
Fresh Grass	£12.50
Grass Silage	£13.50
Hay/haylage	£12.00
Maize Silage	£13.00
Wholecrop Silage	£14.50
Alkalage Silage	£21.70
Crimped Maize	£14.50

Other analysis's are available, please ring the MGA office for details.