



MGA TIMES

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MGA DEMONSTRATION SITE 2006

Following on from the success of last years HSBC sponsored, very successful demonstration sites in Oxfordshire and Devon, we are setting out to repeat the exercise in 2006. This years efforts will be concentrated at the MGA office farm, Town Barton in Devon, the site being the focus of two open meetings the first of which will be on **Tuesday July 11th**. The aim of the project is to demonstrate what is topical in maize growing and to, via the open meetings, provide an opportunity for members to discuss all manner of MGA trial work with Simon Draper, the MGA agronomist & the MGA office team. This year we will be comparing conventional drilling with the MGA Eco Drill, the Vaderstad and hopefully the Aitchison direct drill. Alongside the maize establishment options we will be demonstrating seed dressing options as well as maize for bio gas production.



Last year we had over one hundred people at the open days, it proved to be an ideal opportunity for growers to discuss maize drilling, spraying, fertiliser requirements and to question Simon and Ruth. As a bonus we also recruited some new MGA members. We look forward to seeing you in July.

WEED CONTROL IN MAIZE

Included in this mailing is a technical note by Simon Draper outlining the herbicides currently available to maize growers in the UK. This will again prove invaluable to members as an **independent guide** to the efficacy of the various herbicides on the market. Used in conjunction with the MGA weed pictures in your growers guides (please contact the office if you have lost yours) and telephone access to the MGA's agronomists, Simon Draper and Ruth Baker, you should be well placed to grow "weed - free" crops without breaking the bank! To back up the advice from Simon & Ruth, the MGA are again running small plot trials to test the various herbicides available and their efficacy at various rates and combinations, to give members the best information on economic weed control.

WEBSITES OF THE MONTH

The more alert members may remember that we featured this website last May, but with the SP5 forms on the desk again, it was thought a good idea to repeat it again this year. One website of the month is:- www.magic.gov.uk. MAGIC is the first web-based interactive map to bring together information on key environmental schemes and land designations in one place. MAGIC is a project involving seven government organisations, who have responsibilities for rural policy-making and management. Maps can be printed and fields / straight lines measured. Magic has been particularly useful during the completion of SP5 forms and will no doubt become invaluable as Environmental Stewardship applications are being prepared. The other website this month is www.rpa.gov.uk. It gives up to date information on the state of play regarding single payments. (We are still waiting for ours).

With a growing interest in maize being shown by arable farmers, the MGA will have a presence at Cereals 2006 which is being held at Nocton in Lincolnshire on the 14th & 15th June. Please come and visit us on Stand 406. Please mention this to any of your arable farming neighbours who would benefit from becoming an MGA member.



MGA Seed Dressing Trial Results 2005

Plant Population	Treatment	% Control	Mean t/ha	Mean DM%
110,000	Poncho	110	17.4	30.0
110,000	Untreated/Poncho	109	17.2	29.9
110,000	Cruiser	104	16.5	29.9
90,000	Untreated/Cruiser	104	16.4	29.8
110,000	Untreated/Cruiser	101	16.0	28.9
90,000	Cruiser	101	16.0	29.7
110,000	Untreated©	100	15.8	29.4
90,000	Poncho	98	15.5	28.4
90,000	Untreated/Poncho	98	15.4	29.4
90,000	Untreated	95	15.0	28.8

Last year, as part of the ongoing small plot trial work carried out by the MGA, trials were set up at North Allerton in Yorkshire, to evaluate the yield enhancing benefits of the seed dressings Cruiser & Poncho. Along side this trial, we again looked at plant population to verify past experience. Four clear facts were established from the results: -

- 1) Plant populations of 110,000/ha (45,000/acre) tend to out yield populations of 90,000/ha (36,500/acre).
- 2) Untreated seed produced the lowest yield (in some cases this was clearly significant.)
- 3) Cruiser and Poncho both appeared to benefit yield and we could generally say treating all seed ensured the best yield.
- 4) However the 50:50 treated/untreated mixes were always within 0.2t/ha of the fully treated mixes.

The conclusion of the experiment would be that higher plant populations tend to improve yield and that the treatment of seed has a beneficial effect on yield performance of varieties in the case of Cruiser and Poncho (even in the absence of a known pest problem).

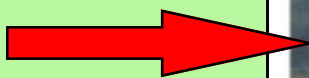
Initially it may appear attractive to consider the opportunity of using untreated seed in the mix to keep the cost down – there was no significant yield penalty by using the 50:50 treated/untreated mixes.

However, we should report that at North Allerton there was no known pest attack and the effects of such an attack could very quickly wipe out any cost benefit from mixing treated and untreated seed.

In true MGA style, this trial will be repeated again this year by NIAB to verify the results. Data from this work will be available to members before next years maize planting season. Also some demonstration plots will be drilled at Town Barton, which will be used as a discussion point at the Open Day on July 11th.

DID YOU KNOW??

One hectare of Energy Maize
=
One years electricity for 5 homes



DIARY DATES

Wednesday 10th May
GRASSLAND EVENT at Shepton Mallet, Somerset.

Wednesday 14th & Thursday 15th June
CEREALS 2006 at Nocton, Lincolnshire.

Sunday 9th to Wednesday 12th July
BGS SUMMER MEETING in Cheshire.

Tuesday 11th July
OPEN DAY at MGA Office Farm, Devon.

Wednesday 20th & Thursday 21st September
DAIRY EVENT at Stoneleigh.

Wednesday 18th October
MGA/BGS MINI CONFERENCE at Ardingly, Sussex.

Last Word — Once again the MGA Office team are indebted to Simon and Chris for providing us with some very sound advice. One or two members have already rung up to ask for the spray recommendations for this year. Having read Chris’s article and now looking at the remains of our silage clamp I can see rooks, pheasants and even ducks! burrowing into what is left of the silage. Included in this mailing as promised is a summary of the wholecrop conference held back in February. If members have a particular subject that they feel needs an airing at either the maize or wholecrop conferences next year, please contact the office.

Maize drilling is continuing at a steady pace around the country, John Cottle (MGA council member) near Chester has 80% of his crop planted. Jeremy Wilson near Canterbury in Kent, was all drilled up last week with his “Ecodrill”, with the plants just breaking the surface. Robbie Taylor, Farms director for Velcourt, had 950 acres planted by the 24th April at Evershot Farms in Dorset, with the earliest drilled up and away! This year we have processed a record number of Nitrogen predictor forms and if you have not already sent yours in, it’s not too late. Jean can send you extra input forms if they have been mislaid.

