

## MGA TIMES



Lloyds TSB  
Agriculture



Lloyds TSB  
Agriculture

Correspondence Address: Town Barton Farm, Sandford, Crediton, Devon. EX17 4LS. Telephone: 01363 775040 Fax: 01363 776938  
E-mail: info@maizegrowersassociation.co.uk Website: www.maizegrowersassociation.co.uk

## In this Issue

- ◆ MGA Conference 2011.
- ◆ This years maize—Chris Savery.
- ◆ 2011 Variety booklet.
- ◆ Grain maize Variety choice.
- ◆ Maize Varieties for plastic—John Morgan.
- ◆ Diabrotica update.

## MGA MAIZE CONFERENCE 2011—THURSDAY 17th FEBRUARY

Included in this months mailing is an invitation to the 2011 Maize Conference. This year we are heading a bit further north, (well it is North if you live in Devon or Cornwall!). The venue is Harper Adams University College in Shropshire. A few years ago the MGA held a very well attended wholecrop conference there, so the MGA Council decided that we should take the Maize Conference further up the country. The conference will cover a range of maize related topics.



- Maize for Beef Simon Marsh, Senior lecturer at Harper Adams
- Grain maize Alistair House, Farmer and Nuffield/GNTA scholar
- Maize for Biogas Stephen Temple, Norfolk dairy farmer, with Biogas plant
- Maize in Germany Herr Mesner, German equivalent of MGA
- MGA 2010 trials report Simon Draper, MGA Agronomist
- A tour of the College farm enterprises after the conference has been organised, where we will look at the New dairy unit, beef unit and the College AD plant.

The MGA would like to thank the conference sponsors for their continued support.



## WESTERN CORN ROOTWORM (DIABROTICA VIRGIFERA VIRGIFERA) HAS IT GONE FOR GOOD?

A recent article written by Dominic Eyre in the Food and Environment Research Agency (FERA) October/November newsletter asks this specific question. Dominic, who is no stranger to the MGA having worked with the association during the Diabrotica outbreak and spoken to at least one MGA conference, uses data collected over the last eight years in his article. He notes that as indicated in the table, 2010 is the third year that no beetles have been detected and that as a consequence it is reasonable to assume that the populations detected between 2003 and 2007 have been eradicated.

Number of Diabrotica beetles trapped in the UK, 2003-2010

Year	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Number Trapped	92	87	481	27	3	0	0	0

Such an outcome is great reward for all the hard work put in by all involved in the eradication programme. The news must also be a relief for the affected farmers.

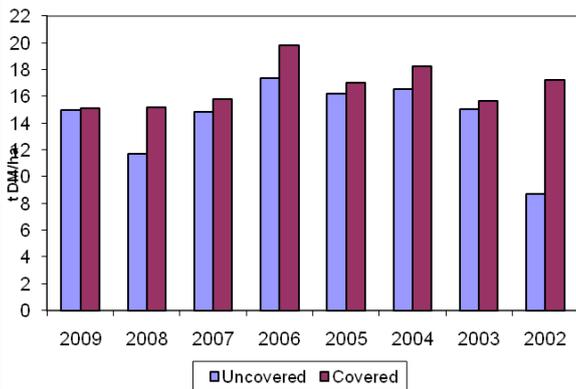
Dominic finishes his piece however with a word of caution. He points out that the possibility remains that Diabrotica could return and that it therefore remains a threat.



## PLASTIC, SHOULD I OR SHOULDN'T I?

There is no doubt that the use of plastic film increases the temperature of soil underneath it considerably when compared to uncovered land. Warmer soil allows earlier drilling and as a consequence, if similar maturity group varieties are grown, earlier harvest of high quality maize. Published research, and work from North and Southern Ireland all concludes that on average, yields of DM per ha increase, as does starch content. The challenge is therefore to quantify whether the advantages are economic. Members keen to answer this question are encouraged to dig out their last years MGA conference information and to study Tim O'Donovan's paper, in which he discussed the question in some detail. To wet your appetite here is one graph taken from Tim's paper comparing maize yields with and without plastic over the last 8 years. Interested members are also encouraged to read the technical note included in this mailing, focusing on variety choice for maize under plastic.

Irish Maize Trial Yields 2002-2009  
Source DAFF National List Trials



## MGA VARIETY BOOKLET 2011

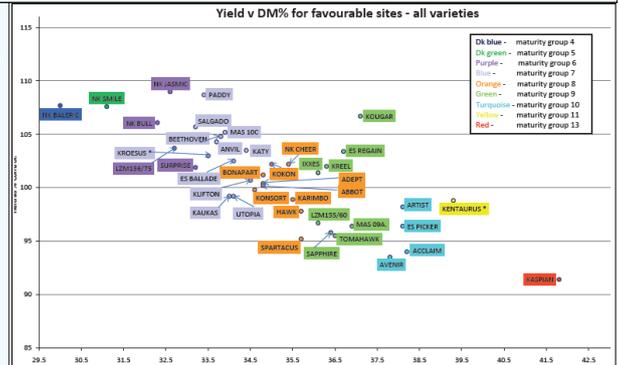
In this mailing you will find what some say is the flagship publication of the association, The MGA Recommended First Choice Variety List. As in the past it includes data on all the first choice varieties trialled and selected by NIAB for favourable and less favourable sites. The booklet also contains lots of supporting information designed to inform, including this year graphs showing the characteristics of the various varieties.

Figure 1 taken from the booklet illustrates the relationship between yield and DM% at harvest (the best available data to indicate a varieties earliness). The graph clearly shows that, unsurprisingly the cost of earliness is a yield reduction, however the graph also illustrates that there are varieties in each maturity group that exceed the group average and if chosen can minimise the yield loss linked to maturity relationship.

Another key section of the book is the one that lists and explains the 7 steps to choosing the right variety for each individual field on your farm. This well proven method of matching land, weather and maturity is a must to identify which maturity groups you should be choosing from.

Take time to study this year's booklet and use it wisely in your coming negotiations with the trade. Choose only independently tested varieties and be wary of changing variety on all you land in any one year. The MGA recommendation is to stick with a proven variety for the bulk of your crop and to choose some new material, based on independent data, for the rest of your maize area.

Fig 1.  
Yield vs DM%  
graph taken from 2011 MGA Recommended Variety List

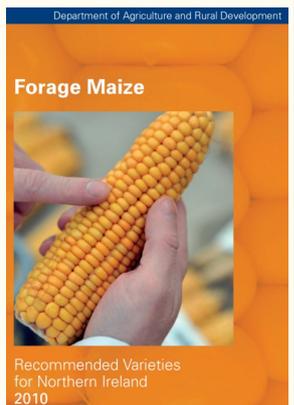


## NORTHERN IRELAND MAIZE VARIETIES

The 2010 Maize Variety list for Northern Ireland is available by typing in the following web address into your internet browser. Alternatively just type in Northern Ireland Maize Variety list into a good search engine and let it do the work for you.

<http://eservices.afbini.gov.uk/recommendedvarieties/foragemaze/default.aspx>

The very comprehensive recommended list, like Southern Irelands, reviews varieties both with and without plastic and will make particularly interesting reading for marginal maize growers. Ten varieties are recommended for open establishment with twenty one recommended for sowing under plastic. On both lists not only are the yields and starch information noted but also Silking heights and dates are also recorded. A comparison of both south and north lists should be a must for those looking at growing maize on the margins.



**Masstock**  
SMART FARMING

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