

# MGA TIMES



Lloyds TSB  
**Agriculture**



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## MGA GROUPS AND THE RECOMMENDED LIST.

The main focus of this mailing is the MGA Recommended Variety Booklet in which data is presented in Favourable and non Favourable site lists.

After much deliberation and member feedback, the MGA have decided to continue listing varieties according to maturity. While we appreciate this approach may be at odds with some in the industry, it is believed that members will benefit from clear guidance as to the division of the list, to make the tables useful on their own farms.

The division of the full list into "MGA groups" is based on both, the statistical analysis of the data and the meaningful difference in expected maturity of varieties. We have worked on a 5 day difference in maturity between each MGA group. We would welcome feedback from members on the new list.



**MGA Recommended  
First Choice  
Maize Varieties 2012**



**In this booklet**  
How to choose the right maize variety for your farm

Variety results from NIAB.

Variety choice for biogas production.

Maize under plastic.

Booklet Priced £20.00  
To non-MGA members



Anvil - 1st choice  
Atrium - 1st choice  
Capris - 1st choice  
Salgado - 1st choice

For more information, please consult your Masstock contact or call Brendan Paul on 07767 310454

### MGA CONFERENCE 2012 THURSDAY 23RD FEBRUARY

Inside this mailing is enclosed a flyer for the 2012 MGA Conference which due to popular demand and a very good lunch! will again be held at the Royal Agricultural College in Cirencester. The event, to be held on Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> February, will feature presentations of the results of the MGA research programme by Simon Draper and Neil Groom plus papers focused on Livestock nutrition by Andrew Holland of Ontrak Nutrition, improved forage analysis by Jonathan Blake FAA group and maize growing for biogas production. We are also lucky enough this year to have a paper presented by Farmers Weekly dairy farmer of the year Gavin Fowler who will talk about the role of maize within his farming system. Please fill in and return the booking slip on the bottom of the flyer to reserve your place. How about bringing a car load of potential members with you?

## BIRDS AND MAIZE MEETING PROVED POPULAR

The MGA members meeting held in Pilton nr Glastonbury in Somerset proved to be a great success, with 30 or so member's in attendance. Complementary papers from local vets Paddy Gordon and Steve Turner tackled the economic and bio security issues associated with birds feeding alongside cows during winter. Paddy and Steve were followed by an excellent illustrated presentation by Alan Britton of Natural England, who explained the Natural England experience of dealing with the birds including distraction, building proofing and the limited, but real licensed shooting options. Dairy consultant Mike Hobbis presented the final paper, during which he outlined the history and current state of play of his work with in feed bird deterrents. While sadly not identifying a silver bullet solution to the very real problem, members left the meeting better informed as to the costs of the problem and with various positive pointers as to what they can do to minimise the impact of birds on their holdings. Several of the presented papers are available on the MGA web site and we hope to get the remaining ones on the website as soon as possible.

## NEW PLASTIC ON THE BLOCK!

Farmers at the Scottish marginal maize meeting learnt firsthand of the work SAC and new plastic manufacturer ÉconVerte have been doing in Dumfries to evaluate their plastic (DegriCover) when used in maize growing. The claims that the plastic will "safely degrade to no environmental impact" went down well, as did the entry of a competitor's product in the market place which has historically been dominated by one package.

The presence of a new plastic supplier brings the potential of reduced establishment costs, alongside the recognised benefits of plastic such as extra yield, earlier harvests and improved starch levels.

David McGrath of ÉconVerte explained that the company can "tailor the degradability of the PE film" and as a result "have taken a calculated approach to the maize growers needs, with a plastic film that is designed for maize to easily grow through".

David goes on to point out that "the 'expiry date' of DegriCover is programmed to happen at between 8 and 10 weeks post harvest after which degradation kicks in. By 20 weeks confetti particles are all that remain. These small particles apparently continue to degrade until small enough to be consumed by soil micro-organisms".

Perhaps not surprisingly ÉconVerte believe that DegriCover "is a great leap forward from that which is currently used in the market, which dates back to around 1997"

Commenting on the likely demand for DegriCover, David said: "Interest in the product from growers wanting to boost their yields, particularly in marginal areas, has been phenomenal but the capacity for the 2012 maize season is limited."

He added that the company are looking forward to the 2012 growing season and working with growers and hopefully the MGA on larger trials in the future.

Members keen to know more can contact David direct on 07963666050 or via email on [d.mcgrath@econverte.com](mailto:d.mcgrath@econverte.com) Even better news is that ÉconVerte have chosen to join the MGA as commercial members and look likely to take up the chance of a stand at the MGA conference in February, where interested growers will be able to see the product for themselves and talk to David direct.

# NK Cheer

pure energy,  
positive results



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## SCOTTISH MEETING REVIEW

Early October saw a gathering of over 80 farmers and associated industry representatives at the SAC Crichton Royal Farm, nr Dumfries for what has become an annual gathering of maize growers North of the border. After what can at best be described as a very challenging maize growing season, all were very keen to collectively regroup and discuss lessons learnt.

The meeting, again organised by MGA vice Chairman Hugh McClymont, who is the farm manager at SAC Dumfries heard presentations on marginal maize growing, maize varieties and a new type of plastic which Hugh has tried this year. The inside talks were followed by guided tours of the variety plots put down by Grainseed and Limagrain UK, as well as the ÉconVerte plastic demonstrations.

Our thanks go to Hugh for organising the event and the commercial companies for their time and effort in laying down the plots.



Delegates looking at maize plots on a sunny Scottish afternoon!