

MGA TIMES



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IMPROVING ENERGY YIELD OF MAIZE IN MARGINAL CLIMATES

We are delighted that Dr Bridget Lynch from University College Dublin (UCD) has agreed to update members on the results of her ongoing work looking at maize growing in Ireland at the MGA annual conference on Thursday February 13th. Bridget is heading up the three year SAMCO and UCD Enterprise Ireland Innovation Partnership Research Project. The four site project is focused on maize grown under plastic and is looking at the impact of different plastic types, varieties, soil types, herbicide programmes, optimum nitrogen levels and climate on the energy yield of maize. In time, the project aims to focus on the role of maize as a supplement to grazed grass, in terms of its impact on milk quality and production. If Bridget's presentation to attendees on the MGA summer tour to Ireland is anything to go by, her paper should be of real interest.



MGA SPONSORSHIP

The MGA Council are delighted to announce that Mole Valley Farmers are the new sponsors of the Maize Growers Association. Their Chairman, Graeme Cock is a former MGA Chairman and a very enthusiastic MGA member. Graeme will officially launch the sponsorship at the conference on the 13th February.



CONFERENCE SPEAKERS

We have a great line up of speakers for the conference in February, as well as Bridget Lynch from Ireland, we have Alistair Wannop, who will be talking about the development of his maize fed AD plant. Growing maize in Cumbria has until recently been fairly uncommon, but with the advent of earlier varieties and plastic, it is now much more viable and it will be fascinating to find out how Alistair has achieved this. With the conclusion of the LINK project focused on improving the analysis of maize silage via NIRS, we have asked Jonathan Blake to come and explain the relevance of the work to members.

Graeme Cock will outline his philosophy on growing maize and the economics and quality benefits he gets from growing the crop under plastic in Devon.

Simon Draper and Neil Groom will outline the MGA independent trial work carried out in 2013. A member of the ADAS team will update members on the early results of the two year, two site, cultivation and biodiversity trial being conducted at in Devon and Norfolk

As in the past, there will be an opportunity for our commercial members to promote their products in 5 minutes in the popular "Short & Sweet" session.

Due to the distance involved in getting to the conference, we are trying to put together an overnight package for those travelling from afar, along with a dinner and talk by our Chairman Hugh McClymont on his summer trip to the USA"

Please see the conference programme for more details and book your place.

SUBSCRIPTION INCREASE

In a further attempt to bridge the gap between subscription income and inflationary pressure on the running costs of the MGA, the Council of Management of the association agreed at their September meeting to increase the subscriptions of all members by 15% from January 1st 2014. In effect, this means an increase in the grower sub of £15/year. Commercial subscriptions will increase at the same percentage rate. While any increase is not ideal, the council's view is that such a rise is necessary, if we are to meet the members requirements for top quality, independent farmer focused information.

Another year nearly over, but definitely a more successful one for growing and harvesting maize and wholecrop, 2012 was a year to forget. This has been a busy 2013 for the MGA, some very good training days held around the country, with good numbers at all of them and a good recruiting tool for us. Although the feeling was that maize would lose popularity after the wet of last year, DEFRA statistics show the area of maize has increased by quite a margin. Much of this increase is due to the commissioning of AD plants, particularly in the East and North East. This is borne out by some new, enthusiastic MGA members from that part of the world.

The MGA office team would like to thank our experts, Simon, Chris & Ruth for being on the end of the phone to give members advice.

Lastly we would like to wish all MGA members a Happy Christmas and a prosperous 2014!

**BETTER MAIZE ANALYSIS
IMPROVES RATION ACCURACY**

Last week saw the release of a press release relating to the Better Maize Analysis project undertaken by the Forage Analytical Assurance Group (FAA). Members will recall that the project, which ran over two years, analyzed 90 samples of maize via different methods, in order to ultimately improve the accuracy of the maize silage analysis sent to farmers. Jean from the MGA office gathered samples, mainly from members during the winters of 2010 and 2011. While more detailed information on the project results are available from the FAA chairman Jonathan Blake, (contact details via the office) the press release makes the following points.

- The study looked into the rates at which Nitrogen and Dry Matter disappear in the rumen
- That in the past, the supply of protein in the rumen from maize silage was overestimated and that levels of bypass protein were a little higher than was thought to be the case. Practically this means that the balance of rumen degradable and bypass protein in rations will need to be re examined.
- That the rumen energy levels of maize silage tend to be less than currently assumed, meaning that rations will need to be supplemented with more rumen energy, if cow potential is to be achieved.

We would urge members who are keen to learn more to contact Jonathan Blake via the MGA office.

LAMMA 2014

Due to the increased interest and growing of maize in the east of the country, the MGA Council felt that the organisation should have a stand at LAMMA in January. The dates for the 2 day event are 22nd & 23rd January at the East of England Showground, Peterborough.

Our stand is in Hall 7 - stand number 748



Jean from the MGA office team collecting maize samples for the FAA study 2010/11

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