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**Mole Valley
Farmers**

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MGA VARIETY BOOKLET

The 2019 MGA Variety booklet is at the printers and will be sent separately to MGA members as soon as it is back from printing

We wanted to get this mailing out early to advertise the MGA conference which is in early February rather than at the end of the month.

JEAN STEPS ASIDE

It is with some sadness that I write to inform members that my MGA team mate Jean has, after 14 years decided to bring her involvement with the MGA to a close at the end of the year.

Jean, who joined the Creedy Associates team providing administration and technical support, at the very start of our involvement back in 2004 will be very much missed by me, the MGA council and members who over the years have been assured of loyal, considered and practical response to all that has been thrown her way.

Jean has kindly agreed to remain close to the phone during what we hope will be a smooth transition period for which we are very grateful. I hope members will be reassured to know that we have appointed a replacement (if ever they could be!) for Jean, more about whom in a future mailing.

I will finish by simply saying Thank you Jean.

MGA CONFERENCE 2019 - 7th FEBRUARY

We are delighted to announce details of the 2019 MGA conference within this mailing. The conference for the first time will be heading to the NFU headquarters at Stoneleigh where members will have chance to hear from an excellent panel of speakers including farmers, researchers and agronomists working in the UK and beyond. Our main sponsors once again are Syngenta and ARK and we are very grateful for their continued support for MGA Maize conferences.

We are holding the conference earlier this year 7th February to tie in with the Dairy Tech event the day before at Stoneleigh. Our farmer speaker this year is Gavin Davies who is farm manager at Stowell Farms, in Wiltshire. Gavin provides the lead on the 1200 ha mixed farm with dairy, AD, arable and sheep enterprises where they harvest 10 – 20 thousand tonnes of maize each year. Gavin and his team are finalists in the 2018 RABDF Gold Cup competition.

As traditionally in past conferences we have invited an overseas speaker and this year Danish research will be reported by Leif Knudson, he spoke to us in 2009 and will update us on the Danes work on precision nutrient management and application on maize crops.

Drone technology is advancing fast and Craig Green an independent agronomist will update delegates on the role of drones in maize agronomy. We are hoping to have a speaker from the NFU to talk about the implications for agriculture after Brexit.

The afternoon session will start with reports on the MGA Trials results and this will be followed by the ever popular "Short & Sweet" session which will round off what we hope will be a very interesting Maize conference.

Please fill in the enclosed flyer to book your place.

MAIZE DRILLING COURSE – ADVANCE WARNING!

Consistent seed placement at drilling is one of the most important steps down the road towards a great crop of maize. It is with top quality drilling in mind that with the help of Rod and David from Bright Seeds, the MGA are running three Maize Drilling Courses during March next year. The courses will be very practical, being focused around a real-life maize drill and run by Simon Draper, MGA Agronomist.

A detailed flyer with dates and locations will follow in the New Year, however if you would like to register an interest now please contact the office.



THREE SYSTEMS FOR UNDERSOWING MAIZE

Water supply company United Utilities (UU) have, in an attempt to protect the quality of the groundwater from which they abstract drinking water, been working with farmers and independent agronomist Paul Sweeney in Cheshire during the 2018 growing season.

The focus of the extensive trials is the potential of under-sown grass cover crops to reduce nutrient and in particularly nitrogen losses from maize fields. What is particularly interesting about the UU work is their comparison of grass established at the same time as maize drilling, with grass established via broadcasting and drilling seed in June at the 4-6 leaf stage and a post-harvest established cover crop.

While the results are yet to be finalised, (watch this space!) the treatments included are listed in the table. We hope to review the UU project results at the MGA conference on the 7th of February as well as in a future mailing. Thanks to UU and Paul for letting us know more about this very interesting work.

Main trial plots			
Plot	May sowing	June 4-6 leaf	October harvest
1	Maize only	CONTROL	None
2	Maize only	Tall Fescue + Perennial Rye Grass DRILLED	None
3	Maize only	Italian Rye Grass DRILLED	None
4	Maize only	Tall Fescue + Perennial Rye Grass BROADCAST	None
5	Maize only	Italian Rye Grass BROADCAST	None
6	Maize only	N-Inhibitor	None
7	Maize + Tall Fescue + Perennial Rye Grass DRILLED	N-Inhibitor	None
8	Maize + Tall Fescue + Perennial Rye Grass DRILLED	None	None
9	Maize + Italian Rye Grass DRILLED	None	None
10	Maize only	None	Tall Fescue + Perennial Rye Grass DRILLED

A BRIEF REPORT ON THE 2018 TRIALS

Caroline Coe from Grainseed has given us a brief summary of some of the trials conducted this year, in not the ideal conditions! Please come to the conference to get the full story.

With a potential loss of Mesurol we looked at different bird repellents and drilling depths. In the repellency trials which were single rows of seeds drilled on to the soils surface with different seed coatings, nothing was as bird repellent as Mesurol. However, in the drilling depth trial we found there were significantly less seed losses when drilling deep, with very little difference between untreated and Mesurol treated seed. The trial was drilled at two timings, April and May. Drilling in May into warmer soils also yielded better than the April drilling.

Although there was little eyespot in the Eyespot trial, South Wales, we found yield differences between treated and untreated plots. Comet applied at 1l/ha yielded 16.7t/ha, 1.9t/ha more than the untreated plots (14.8t/ha).

The Nutrient trial in Cheshire which involved seed dressings, pre and post em treatments and spray applications did not show huge differences between treatments but Boost applied at 20l/ha pre and post emergence and 60kg of DAP had the highest DM% and dry matter yield.

A quicker method of getting a dry matter has been found by using an Air fryer rather than an oven. Samples can be chopped using a garden chipper and dried down using an Air fryer taking 90 minutes rather an 24 hours in the oven, proven to be just as accurate and saving time.

A full report on the trials will be presented at the conference on 7th February.

Last, Last word:

As you will know, I am hanging up my boots (and soil thermometer!) at the end of the year. I have enjoyed my 14 years working for the Maize Growers Association and have met many farmers and commercial MGA members. The Maize Growers Association is a great organisation and I think it is even more important to support independent groups such as the MGA & BGS in these turbulent and un-settling times.

Thank you to John Morgan, who as well as being my team mate, guided me through some nerve racking conferences by telling me it is character building! and also taught me that “nothing is for free” every time I helped myself to pens, hats and pads of paper from stands at Dairy events!

I have worked with some great committee members and dedicated Chairmen, who have made the job very enjoyable.

Finally thanks to all MGA members and have a Happy Christmas and healthy and prosperous New Year.

I had better stop now as it is beginning to sound like an Oscar acceptance speech! (sob, sob)



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