

# MGA TIMES

## Maize Growers Association

June 2019

In this issue: *Forage Cost Comparison Table - Agronomy Technical Note 'Post-Harvest Cover Crops' - Agronomy Technical Note 'Maize Eyespot in 2019'*

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### MGA and Syngenta Herbicide Trial Open Evening Focusing on Options Post-Calaris

On 8th July 2019 we are running an open evening on our herbicide trial site in Cheshire. Arrive at 6.30pm for a 7pm start. There will be a chance to walk around our pre-emergence, post-emergence and sequential herbicide trials, whilst Simon Draper explains progress and results so far. There will then be a focus on the Syngenta demo plots which are accompanying the MGA trials on the same site. The treatments being used in these demo plots are as follows:

1. Pre-em Dual Gold [1.4 l/ha]
2. Early post-em Callisto GS12-14 [0.75 l/ha]
3. Early post-em mix product (s-metolachlor + mesotrione) GS 12-14 [1.25 l/ha]
4. Post-em Callisto GS 18 [0.75 l/ha]
5. Post-em Callisto GS 18 + [0.75 l/ha]

Georgina Wood of Syngenta (speaker at our conference in February 2019) will explain these demo plots and observations whilst also being available to answer any questions. The focus is on non-Calaris options, including different mixes and application timings.

Attendance will be free of charge but please let us know in the office if you plan to come along. There will be tea and coffee available.

We will meet in the car park at Chestnut Meats Farm Shop, Longfields Farm, Long Lane, Brindley, Nantwich, Cheshire, CW5 8NF.

*By kind permission of host farmer, John Hocknell, and trials contractor, Derek Mitchell of North West Agronomy.*



### Nitrogen Predictor Summary

Thank you to those of you that sent across your N-predictor forms, I hope you found the results and feedback useful - I have enjoyed analysing the outputs for you and it's interesting to see how small changes in cropping, drilling date and soil type can have such an effect on the amount of fertiliser required by a crop. One member asked if we could run their N predictor for both early-harvest (i.e. 2 weeks before the crop is mature), and mid-harvest (when the variety has reached maturity) to see how different the nitrogen requirements were for each. It turned out that there was a 50kg/ha difference - that's quite a saving in cost if you were planning to apply your normal amount but harvest early! So if you are struggling to make decisions or need some guidance, an N predictor result could be an extra factor in your decision to sow early/late or apply 40t/ha of cattle manure in October or February. Feel free to send in a few options - we can compare the results of multiple scenarios until you find one that matches the amount of inorganic nitrogen that you would like to apply. I will try to get your prediction back to you within the week, feel free to phone and chase me if you haven't heard anything.

### Practical Maize Harvest Management Courses

Following the success of the drilling courses held in March, we have decided to run harvest courses of a similar style. They will be held at the end of August in three central locations: Harper Adams on 28th August, University of Reading on 29th August, and one in the North-East (to be confirmed) which will be around the same date. The target audience, whilst anyone is welcome, will be farmers and harvest contractors.

The aim is to **prepare you for an efficient and effective harvest** by:

1. Running an indoor theory session on deciding target harvest maturity, assessing dry matter (DM), choosing chop length, choosing additives, and successful clamp filling
2. Heading outdoors for a look-see session with a maize harvester during which the procedures for and importance of servicing and setting-up the forager will be explained with the opportunity to ask any questions you may have

Lunch will be provided

Price per head will be £50+VAT and places are limited so will be offered on a first-come-first-served basis. Please contact the office to book a place.

## Soil Temperature Review

Now that my first year doing drilling soil temperatures is over, I thought it would be a good idea to summarise what we have learnt and clarify the protocol and aims so that you can look back over the temperatures and the date that you drilled and evaluate whether you would make the same decision again.

### Protocol

The 'rules' of measuring soil temperatures was that it had to be done at 9am in the same spot at 10cm deep every week (daily towards the end). For reference, where the temperature had been taken at a different time of the day or different depth, this was stated in the table so that it was not misleading if a little higher than the other values on that day. Once you had measured your soil temperatures, you then emailed them to me and I added them to the table where I edited a bottom 'Trend Line' which represented the increase or decrease from the previous week.

### What Have We Learnt?

There is more to drilling date than the soil temperature. I'm sure you already know that, but varietal differences, weed pressure, weather forecast, contractor availability, and soil moisture are all huge contributing factors so these soil temperature reports were to accompany the plethora of other factors that you had to take into consideration. Soil temperature can also vary significantly from field to field so there is some merit in taking temperatures in the same spot every week, or perhaps a few times across the same field to ensure that you haven't picked the only boggy corner to record in. Next year I also hope to incorporate the weather forecast in some manner as well, so that we can see how dramatically changes in the weather affect the soil temperatures, and perhaps consequently make better predictions for the soil temperatures for the coming week.

### Summary

In a completely accurate world, you would all stand at 150m above sea level in a south-facing arable field on silt soil with identical thermometers at 9am, however that would be impossible so this is a slightly less accurate compromise. Next year we may try for a mini-profile of each field that you're measuring in (which some of you did send so thank you), so that readers of the soil temperature table are better able to compare it to their own fields. If you have any feedback, please send it my way, likewise if you had your own method of deciding when the soil is ready for drilling then please do share - it may be that we can incorporate this next year and another member may find that it is the perfect method for them.

**ARE YOU  
READY FOR  
THE BIGGEST  
BREAKTHROUGH  
IN FORAGE  
INOCULANTS IN  
20 YEARS?**

POWERED  
BY  
L. HILGARDII  
CNCM I-4785

**LALLEMAND**



## An Interesting Paper Summary in the 'Grass and Forage Manager' Publication

In the Summer 2019 publication by the British Grassland Society (issue 137), there was an interesting article summarising a paper written by Georg Terler, Leonhard Gruber and Wilhelm F. Knaus titled 'Nutritive value of ensiled maize stover from nine different varieties harvested at three different stages of maturity'. It begins by explaining that the high starch content in the maize ear contributes to its silage having a higher energy content than grass silage. However, this can be impaired by poor quality stover - this is the **leaves, stalks and husks**. So the experiment mentioned here tested the nutrient composition and rumen degradability of nine different varieties at ear DMs of 50%, 55% and 60%. There were some differences between varieties of organic matter, crude protein and neutral detergent fibre suggesting that there is varietal variation in maize stover and thus potential to breed varieties with a greater stover degradability. With regards to harvest date, the results were fairly inconclusive, however the authors did suggest that harvesting any later than 55% DM would lead to less-nutritional stover, reducing the silage quality overall.

This investigation and any that may follow could contribute to the ability of plant breeders to produce a maize variety with a high nutritional value and digestible stover such that it compliments the high starch levels in the ear, producing an exceptionally high-energy maize silage.

Thanks to British Grassland Society for bringing this research to our attention.

Stover (husks, stalks, leaves)



55mm

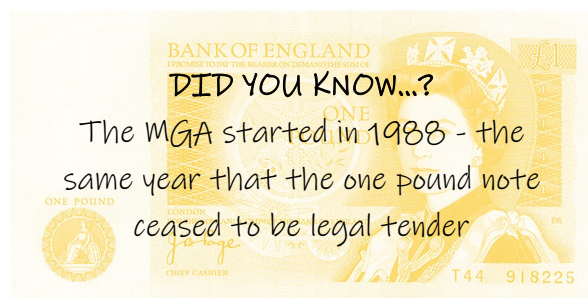
### Adverts

You will have noticed that we often have small square adverts in this newsletter. If you have a maize/wholecrop-related advert that you would like to pop in this space, please give me a call or drop me an email for prices. I can also send across a copy of the plan for mailings for the rest of 2019 to find the best spot to fit your ad in. Other sizes are available, as are separate flyers.

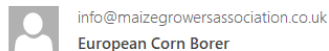
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### Poland

Regrettably, we have to inform you that our contacts have not come through for the Poland trip this month. That's not to say that there will not be an MGA trip soon but we are going to re-group and investigate some other contacts both in the UK and overseas and as usual, I will keep you posted.



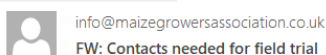
Bean Seed Fly.docx  
55 KB



Corn borer 2019.JPG  
104 KB

Good morning,

Good afternoon,



Trial Planning Sheet 19-00300 (1).docx  
13 KB

Hello,



9th May.xlsx  
20 KB

Good morning,

### Junk Folder

It has been brought to my attention that info@maizegrowers emails have been landing in members' junk folders rather than the inbox. If you did not receive any of my soil temperature emails back in March/April/May, it may be worth checking your junk folder. If they aren't in there either then I don't have your email address! Drop me an email to let me know if this is the case and I'll add you to the list so that you don't miss out on any more content.

### Dates for your diary:

**21st June** - First day of Summer

**8th July** - Herbicide trial demo evening with Syngenta, Cheshire

**Late August** - Harvest Courses

**3rd-4th September** - European Maize Meeting, Nottingham

**2nd October** - Bath and West Dairy Show (Come and see us in the Edmund Rack Pavilion)

**31st October** - Hallowe'en

