

MGA TIMES



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:-

- ◆ Protein Supplement options—Chris Savery.
- ◆ Heat stress—Chris Savery.
- ◆ Maize stubble and runoff—Richard Smith (EA).
- ◆ Maize under Plastic—John Morgan.

TEXT MESSAGES

To get quick messages to MGA members, particularly diabrotica and eyespot warnings, we are investigating the possibilities of sending instant texts. Could we please have your mobile phone numbers if you are interested in the idea of this new feature of MGA Membership.

MAIZE EVENT AT STOKE BARDOLPH

On the 26th June, MGA Chairman and Severn Trent Water Ltd Farm Manager, John Jackson, hosted a maize demonstration event at Stoke Bardolph, nr Nottingham. The event primarily organised by Syngenta, enabled growers to hear of the latest maize herbicide and variety options available, as well as learning firsthand about general maize agronomy from Simon Draper, MGA Agronomist. In addition to the above, maize under plastic was discussed with the help of specialist Rob Wilkinson and John took the opportunity to tell attendees about Seven Trent's plans for a new bio-gas plant. By all accounts the event was a great success. The icing on the cake from our point of view, was the phone call to Jean in the office from a new member saying that the information at the meeting more than justified his membership fee.



WHOLECROP MEETING

The MGA are organising an on farm wholecrop day, in the Autumn, looking at chop length, feeding, additives and other wholecrop issues affecting livestock farmers. There will be more details in the August issue of the mailing.

AXE & TAMAR CATCHMENT MEETINGS

Early July saw the first of the 2009 series of demonstration meetings in the river Axe and Tamar catchments in Devon. The series of meetings follow on from the successful events in 2008 and aims to help farmers grow good crops of maize in an environmentally sustainable manner. The meetings, funded by the Vocational Training Scheme and Catchment Sensitive Farming projects, will run throughout this year's growing season. The first meeting focused on variety choice, early weed control and cultivation options. The group worked through an onsite variety trial, while talking about the MGA Variety Selector tool. Simon Draper was on hand to dig some soil pits as an aid to discuss maize establishment.

FOLIAR FEEDS ON TRIAL

Due to popular demand and a decision by MGA council to allocate as much money as possible to R & D, we have been able, with the help of trials contractor Grainseed Ltd, to set up a foliar feed trial at Harper Adams University College in Shropshire. The treatments have all been applied and yield data from the replicated plots will be collected and reported at next years conference.

Grainseed Ltd are also running the MGA fungicide trial. The work, looking at the effectiveness of different treatments to control Maize Eyespot, is being run at Adrian Mitchells farm near Holsworthy in West Devon. Adrian has kindly agreed to host the trial, as his maize was seriously affected with eyespot last year, even though a very late application of fungicide slowed down disease growth in some fields. The development of eyespot depends on cold wet conditions which thank goodness we have yet to see this year, let's hope we can say the same thing at the end of the season!

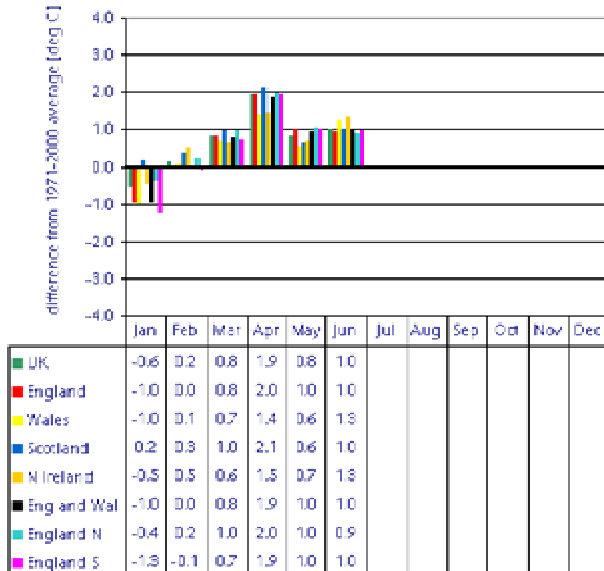
Simon Draper taking a look at Adrian Mitchells 2008 eyespot infected maize crop.



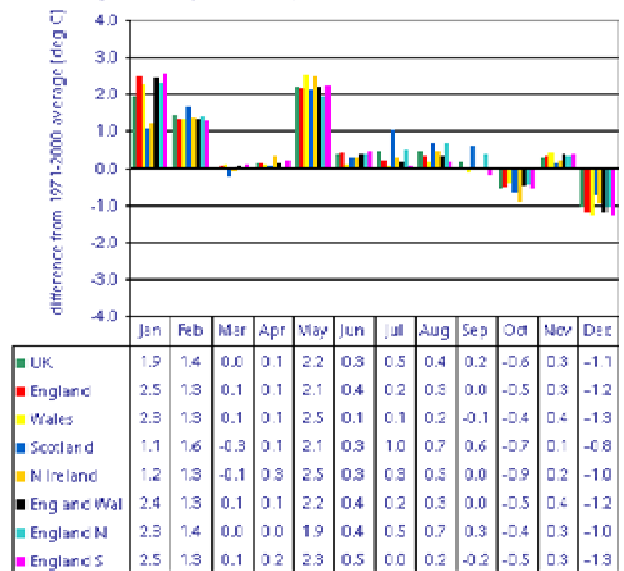
WHAT A DIFFERENCE A YEAR MAKES!

While the growing season is far from over, the weather statistics so far seem to suggest that maize has had much better growing conditions than for a year or two and particularly when compared to last year. Temperatures have been consistently higher than the 30 year averages across the whole of the UK since February. High temperatures and average moisture levels have encouraged rapid maize growth and crops are generally looking very well.

Mean temperatures (1971-2000) anomalies for 2009



Mean temperatures (1971-2000) anomalies for 2008



Reports from MGA Council members around the country are suggesting that this year maize is growing well after a slow start. In South Devon, Graeme Cock says that weed control has been difficult and crops vary from excellent in sheltered fields to poor on heavy exposed sites. Michael Christensen from Glastonbury emailed on 13th July to say most of his maize is now over 6ft tall, having had ideal weather. Rain has been in short supply for John Whitbys crops near Slough, with weeds a problem in some of the maize under plastic, due to dry conditions when applying the pre emergent herbicides. Now crops are looking good. John Jackson, MGA Chairman says "after a 'stuttering' start, the maize seed that had moisture within the seedbed had a great early boost, but where moisture was lacking, the seed had to wait for the rains in early May. The former looks fantastic and has relished the hot sunny weather— never seen it so forward at this time of year! The recent deluge of 3 inches of rain in 3 days has set the maize up well to push on. More sunny hot weather now please!"

CLIMATE CHANGE WILL IMPROVE UK MAIZE GROWING CONDITIONS!

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Adapting to inevitable climate change will be important over the next 30 years or so and the new climate change predictions released by DEFRA in June should help with this task. The predictions put together by the Met Offices Hadley Centre and titled "The UK Climate Projections 2009 (UKCP09)" confirm that the UK is likely to see hotter, drier summers and warmer, wetter winters coupled with more frequent extreme weather such as flooding, heatwaves and droughts.

National and perhaps most interestingly regional predictions are available via the Met Office website by following the link at the bottom of this note. 2050's predictions for the average rainfall and temperatures are available as well as info on the hottest and wettest days. In the south west for instance average temperatures are set to rise by 2 degrees with the hottest summer day temperatures predicted to be 31 degrees. Take a look to see what your weather will be like.

www.metoffice.gov.uk/climatechange/guide/ukcp/