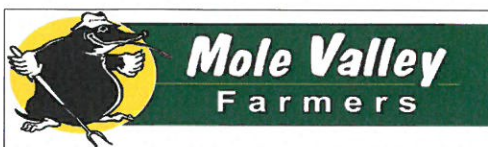


## MGA TIMES



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## RB 209 REVIEW

Believe it or not the process of reviewing the content of the Fertiliser Manual (RB209 for us oldies) has started again. Pleasingly the MGA via John Morgan have been asked to contribute to the review and it is for this reason John asks any member, be they grower or commercial to make contact via the office with any crop nutrient related issues that they think may be relevant. Of particular interest to John and others on technical committee would be the results of any Nitrogen on maize trials conducted, either here or on the continent. For the uninitiated the Fertiliser Manual is the guidance, produced by DEFRA, for the nutrient requirements for the vast majority of crops grown in the UK. It is an advisory document designed for farmers and their advisors and forms the back bone of software such as Planet and Tried and Tested. The nitrogen requirement data for maize, published within the manual, is apparently based on limited work done many years ago, so it would be good to update the next edition with more recent research results.

## In This Issue

- ◆ Slow growing maize—Simon Draper.
- ◆ Harvest options—Chris Savery.
- ◆ Maize in beef systems—Simon Marsh.
- ◆ Biogas trial update—John Morgan.

## OVERSOWING DEMONSTRATION MEETINGS

Catchment Sensitive Farming, in association with the MGA are running three maize oversowing demonstrations sites in Dorset and Wiltshire. On each site ryegrass, cocksfoot and fescue will be established via an adapted Einbock grass harrow machine at the 6-8 leaf stage of the crop. On-site farmer meetings are being arranged by the CSF team on the 21st and 22nd of July to which all are welcome. Invites will be sent to local farmers and details will be posted on the MGA web site in due course. A similar site is also being set up in Somerset with the site meeting being held on the evening of August 5th.



*Adapted grass harrow will be used to establish grass on each site*

## MAIZE SILAGE FOR BEEF PRODUCTION

It is pleasing to be able to include an excellent summary of the Maize for Beef work produced by Simon March, a senior lecturer at Harper Adams University College for Eblex. The summary, reproduced without alteration, outlines the potential for maize within beef finishing, suckler cow and rearing rations, as well as setting out the result from recent research. Members keen to know more should either contact the MGA office or Simon Marsh direct.

DATE FOR YOUR DIARY

## MGA CONFERENCE 2016

25th February at

The Peterborough Arena

## BIOGAS TRIAL EVENING EVENT

In this mailing John Morgan has summarised the biogas trials that are taking place in Norfolk. As a follow up to his article there will be an open evening at the trial site at Gayton near Swaffham. The date for this meeting is **10th September**. We will be sending out an invitation with more details later in the summer, but please put the date in your diaries. It is sure to be a very interesting evening with Simon Draper talking through the trials and as it will be near to harvest, no doubt Simon will get his microwave out!!

NUTRI-PHITE PGA

Gets maize going in the Spring

Agrii



## MAIZE PROGRESS REPORT FROM AROUND THE COUNTRY



Oliver Knowland, who works with biogas plant operators Future Biogas reports that progress of the maize crop so far has been slower, with heat units accumulation down significantly on the 10 year average for the crops he visits in the east of the country. Oliver was keen to point out that it is early days in the crops life with over 75% of the heat unit potential still ahead of us. "We need the weather to warm up soon if we are to heat annual heat unit averages" going on to confirm that we have plenty of time for this to happen.

Nottinghamshire biogas producer and farmer John Jackson reports a good drilling season with crops going in well due to the uninterrupted weather window. Subsequent rain was well received however the crop could do without the blustery cold winds. John's view is that the crop has not started as well as last year with development during 2015 being more "average" in comparison.

Livestock and biogas producer Stephen Temple from Wigton in N. Norfolk reports that maize drilling got under way in mid April with that in the picture being drilled on the 17<sup>th</sup> April following beet. Stephen reports that he will finish off this year's drilling with ultra early variety Kaspien being established post first cut grass silage.

John Whitby in South Bucks had his maize trial under film sown by Matthew Shine on 08<sup>th</sup> April, it got away well, but is today (21st May) as yellow as I have seen any crop. John talks of needing some warm sunshine to move things forward. Like others, John feels that his maize needs

warmth saying that "One week's good weather will make all the difference"

Dairy farmer Joe Foot from Dorchester, reports on 19th May that the last 20 ha of his 2015 crop is being drilled, after first cut grass silage, as he writes.

Joe adds that he is pleased with the performance of the Pre emergence herbicide programme used, putting this down to the recent wet weather. Maize grown under film had 6 true leaves and is 10 inches tall with soil temperatures under plastic recorded at 14 degrees which represents a difference of 3 degrees compared to the 11 degrees recorded outside. Joe feels that emergence has been very slow this year and that where pre emergence herbicides were not used the weed burden needs tackling now. Joe finishes off by reporting that two of his fields needed spraying for leather jackets.

Graeme Cock who grows all his maize under plastic film nr Ashburton in Devon reports that uncovered soil temperatures have barely moved in 6 weeks since crops were drilled, sticking at around 12 degrees or just above. In contrast soil temperatures under the plastic film are typically 5 degrees higher. Like many growers using film, Graeme continues to compare alternative variety choices with 6 covering the lion's share of the farms cropping area this year. The six varieties are Fabrigas, 8200, Marco, A98, Hobbit, T83 plus some Ronaldinio.



**Graeme's maize 29th May**



In comparison to Graeme's crop, the picture on the left is the Town Barton maize on 3rd June. This crop was drilled at the beginning of May. Like most areas of the country the MGA base in Mid Devon has experienced a cooler and drier spring than would typically be the case. Maize growth has been steady with progress made during the day checked by cold nights. In contrast to slow crop development weeds have grown well meaning that some crops are struggling to compete. The relatively dry conditions mean that valuable moisture lost to weed growth is not available for the maize seedlings. Time for some rain we think!

I will leave the final comments to Hugh McClymont from SRUC, Dumfries.

"Wind, rain and temperature of 6 degrees C and everyone is miserable!! Roll on Winter Time."

Hugh