

MGA TIMES



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CALARIS - ORDER QUICKLY OR BE DISSAPPOINTED

I know it's a bit early to be thinking about weed control in maize for next year, but, as they say in Houston, We



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Have A Problem!

The very popular post emergence herbicide Calaris is about to enter its final year of UK clearance with an end date for use of February 28th 2020 being set.

The final use date means that sellers of the product have to sell it a year before so that the latest date the product can be brought is the **28th February 2019**. 30% of usual volume will be available in 2019.

Obviously, merchants do not want to have it in stock after this date, so they will be selling it on a 'when it's gone it's gone' type scenario.

All this means that to get stocks of Calaris for next year it needs to be ordered **NOW**.

Calaris is probably one of the best early post emergence sprays for use in the maize crop and its demise it does mean that we have reduced at a stroke the number of grass weed herbicides available. After next year just two post emergence herbicides - Maister and Nicosulfuron (e.g Samson, Milagro) exist, both of which have resistance problems.

For those not using Calaris the approach will have to be a pre-emergence herbicide, followed by either Maister or Nicosulfuron as it will now be too risky to leave everything to the post emergence window.

With the withdrawal of Calaris Syngenta have introduced Camix which is a mix of Mesotrione (as found in Callisto) and S- metolachlor (as found in Dual gold). Camix is most effective at the pre-emergence stage, but can be applied very early post emergence, however unfortunately the grass weed control element when compared to Calaris is poorer with a narrower spectrum.

In future we are going to have to rely on the residual a bit more: Where the weed pressure is not too high then it will still be possible to use Pendimethalin and then follow up with a mix of Nicosulfuron and Mesotrione, or Maister + oil, however where the weed pressure was high (in our trials this year there were high levels of black nightshade) the use of Wing P as the pre-emergence starter was the best option, although a follow up post emergence spray was required to give season long weed control.

We are in early day discussions with Syngenta to demonstrate some of the alternatives available during the 2019 growing season..

CONFERENCE 2019 - DATE & VENUE CONFIRMED

After 4 very successful conferences at Peterborough, we have decided for 2019 we would head for the midlands, to give farmers in the west and south west a shorter journey, so there is no excuse to miss the conference. The date for the meeting is

7th February, the day after the Dairy Tech day. The venue is the NFU headquarters at Stoneleigh. We are hoping to get an NFU expert to talk us through the Brexit situation, which by February should be clearer!! Our overseas speaker is Gilles Manssens from Belgium, John was very impressed with his report at the European Maize Meeting, so we are delighted he has agreed to speak.

DM ASSESSMENT – Significant progress has been made this autumn in accuracy and speed of assessing crop DM% in the approach to harvest. Key has been the use of the Air Fryer which appears able to dry down a sample within an hour or so. The use of a garden shredder has also been a game changer when producing a suitable sample. The photo's below show the process from start to finish at a recent pre harvest maize event.



Knowing that maize typically dries down at around 2% per week we were able to predict crop harvest date to be 10 -14 days post the workshop.

VARIETY TRIALS IN BELGIUM – A MISSED OPPORTUNITY?

At this year’s European Maize Meeting we learnt of the extensive network of independent Belgium variety trials, all of which follow a standard protocol and as a consequence generate valuable data that may be of interest to UK growers to support information available from this side of the channel.

On the 10 sites across the country varieties are entered into Early (FAO 180 – 235) or Late (FAO 236-260) trials. The sites are run by the Varmabel Network following protocols set up by CIPF over many years. The results of both the late and early trials protocols can be found and read with the help of google translate at <http://www.sillonbelge.be>.

During our visit we also took the opportunity to look out for corn borer damage and sure enough we were “lucky” enough to find some. More another day on what could become a problem in the UK if the climate consistently warms up.



Corn Borer Damage in Belgian Trials

MAIZE UNDER-SOWING DEMONSTRATIONS NR BRINKWORTH

More and more and farmers are under sowing maize. Learning of their success or otherwise is useful to improve advice to members going forward. Feedback from some farmer demo’s in the Brinkworth catchment in Wiltshire confirms success with Italian Rye Grass (IRG) being drilled, using a recently constructed Weavings coulter based drill, into the maize at the 4-6 leaf stage at 7 kg/ha seed rate.

The work was funded by Wessex Water who in separate work, during winter 2017/18, recorded that bare maize stubbles lost **61kg N/ha**. Nitrogen loss reduced to **39kg N/ha** when IRG was established post-harvest and was still lower at **19kg N/ha** where IRG was under-sown into the growing maize crop.

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COMMON SMUT (USTILAGO MAYDIS) – DON’T BE ALARMED!

The warm dry summer has seen a resurgence in Smut on some farms. The unsightly white, then black, blister type growth, usually on cobs, tends to occur when crops have been damaged, allowing the causal fungal spores to get a hold. Spores can survive for many years in the soil, meaning that while crop rotation will reduce the risk, total control is almost impossible. The good news is that studies have found that ingestion of maize silage infected with smut by cattle had no detrimental health effects. Deep burying of trash and as a consequence spores is recommended in fields seriously affected.



Maize Smut (Wikipedia)

SILAGE ANALYSIS REMINDER

As always once the maize is harvested it is important to know the constituent value of the crop for either animals or biogas.

The MGA have an arrangement with Sciantec Laboratories and if you require sample bags, please do not hesitate to contact Jean in the MGA Office and she will send you the appropriate packs.



Only from **Agrii**

Last word - The last time we had a summer like the one we have just had was in 1976, not many of us were growing maize then. This is the first year I can remember when maize had such little rain. I asked my brother to comment on the maize season at Town Barton.

“Although the maize at Town Barton was established in perfect conditions and was head high by the 4th of July, that’s where it remained. However cobs formed well and produced a crop of approx. 11.2 tonnes DM/ha which would be 15 - 20% below the average year. As we mix rapeseed meal in with the harvested crop, it is not straightforward to get a sample analysed, but I would imagine the quality would be excellent.



Maize harvest at Town Barton

Italian Ryegrass has been established post-harvest, is looking well and should plug a bit of a winter forage gap”.

Every year is different, lets hope for an easy time in 2019.