

MGA TIMES

Maize Growers Association

April 2020

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Hello all! This improvement in weather has come at just the right time, and it is feeling much more spring-like! We hope that it is making the current situation a little more bearable. We trust that you are keeping well and are following the guidelines of self-isolating, social distancing, and thorough hand-washing! The MGA office team are still very much up and running (if a few villages further apart) so do keep sending us emails or calling if you need advice. We have also received a few N predictor forms that we are working on so keep those coming in in the run-up to drilling.

Soil temps

We have done our second week of soil temperature measurements and are collating data from around the country. Please do email us your readings. Or call if you fancy a chat!

How to measure

Using a soil thermometer, insert into soil to 10cm deep at 9am. We are collecting data on Monday mornings at the moment but will increase regularity towards the middle of April so any day of the week is fine!

Why they're important

Monitoring the soil temperature means that you'll be ready to drill when they stay consistently at or above 8°C for a week or more.

We would recommend not drilling before 15th April (unless under film) because the risk of frost damage remains high. Also, if soil temperatures should dip below 8 again, germination will be slow so risk of bird damage will be higher as seeds remain vulnerable.

Equally, whilst drilling very late means potentially faster germination in the warmer soil, thus minimising risk of birds taking seed, late drilling = late harvest which means that ground may be wetter, increasing soil damage and environmental impact, and the window for drilling winter cereals or cover crops is reduced.

Readings so far

Surprisingly, considering the wet weather that we have suffered, soil temperatures last week were up around 8°C in the South West and the Midlands. Some readings from Norfolk, however, averaged around 4°C, serving as a reminder that it is still early and we should be monitoring temperature changes carefully for the next few weeks before making any decisions. I will be sending emails out with soil temperature data, and putting them on the website over the next couple of months, so please get involved if you are able!

Email addresses

We are increasingly sending information out via email so if you would prefer to receive the mailing via email and/or do not currently get MGA emails, please contact the office.



Soil temps are one of the key factors in knowing when to drill. Measure at 9am, 10cm deep

Great Gutton Farm
Shobrooke
Credton
Devon
EX17 1DJ
01363 775040
@maizegrowers
Maize Growers Association
info@maizegrowersassociation.co.uk
www.maizegrowersassociation.co.uk



DID YOU KNOW...?

Because around half of the food in the world is produced using inorganic nitrogen fertiliser, it is reasonable to predict that half of the nitrogen in your body (in cells, and protein, including your DNA) was produced in a nitrogen fertiliser factory.

Drilling Courses

A reminder that, although the drilling courses were unable to go ahead, there is a review of last year's courses on our website which will give an indication of the main things that you need to consider, as well as Simon's enclosed article in this mailing.

