

MGA TIMES

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EVENTS

Diary Dates

Wednesday 6th February 2002

Whole Crop Conference at Harper Adams Agricultural College, Shropshire.

Wednesday 27th February 2002

MGA Annual Maize Conference, RAC, Cirencester.

Other Meetings of Interest

The following events are not run by MGA but we thought they may be of interest to MGA Members. For further information please contact BGS on 01189 318189.

Wednesday 30th January 2002

'Forage Legumes For Animal Production'. RAC, Cirencester. Meeting jointly run by the BGS Forage & Legumes Special Interest Group and The IGER Associates.

Mon 15th - Weds 17th April 2002

'Conservation Pays?' University of Lancaster.

Meeting organised by BGS with the British Ecological Society.

MGA/BGS MEETING

Successful Meeting in Sussex

Those who attended the 'Increasing your profits' meeting in Sussex last month felt that the day was very interesting and beneficial. We hope to run a

EVENTS

Visit us at the Agrivision Event on 5th & 6th December

We will be exhibiting at the Agrivision 'Focusing on Farming's Future' event which is taking place at the NAC, Stoneleigh on the 5th & 6th of December. We welcome members to come and visit us on the stand

similar meeting at the same time next year.

to Lelystad in Holland next year (26th November 2002).

R & D ADDITIVE TRIAL

Additive Trial to be Undertaken

In response to requests from members we are undertaking a trial at CEDAR (University of Reading) to evaluate the effect of different types of silage additives on the aerobic stability of maize silage.

The results from this trial will be particularly beneficial for those using maize for **summer** feeding, and will be presented at the MGA's Conference on 27th February next year.

MGA MINERALS

Mineral Update

Enclosed with this mailing is a flyer detailing the upgraded specs of the MGA 200 & Dry Cow Minerals.

WINTER TOUR

No Winter Tour This Year

Unfortunately we can confirm that the research establishments in Holland are unable to accept visitors this year in the present climate. We have however made a provisional booking for a visit

FROM THE CHAIRMAN

Diary from the Chairman's farm ...

It has been a quieter month for us at Kingston Hill with all the fieldwork completed for the year, which means moving on to improvement work around the place and generally getting organised for winter.

The high yielders are now in 24 hours but the low yielding group continue to spend their days out at grazing which reduces our workload to some extent.

The herd is milking well with fat at 4.23% and protein at 3.56% which will help the milk price.

With dry cows and heifers still grazing this is reducing daily workload still further - very welcome after the last two very wet autumns.

This is also allowing us to get the grass grazed off which would have been too long to feel happy about leaving, and reducing the use of straw of which we have very limited stocks.

With my wife Catherine and three year old son Thomas the three of us escaped to Centerparcs in

Sherwood Forest for a week. The one new project that we have on the go is the installation of a new dirty water system. Previous to now we have either tankered all our dirty water out using a slurry gussler or used umbilical contractors on occasions throughout the winter.

This can be a high stress system if it is too wet to travel with the tanker or the umbilical contractor fails to turn up on time so we have been looking at ways of getting some dirty water out every day with a low volume irrigation system. This is taking some time to get set up to a level which we are happy with but it will be worth the time and effort when completed if it takes the pressure off us when it comes to dirty water disposal.

The other activity which requires minimal time but too much capital is the purchase of quota which we have been buying in the last few weeks.

It was good to meet with MGA members at the recent MGA/BGS conference at the South of England Showground.

Richard Smith from the Environment Agency led a useful and frank discussion on what the EA perceive as environmental issues arising from both maize growing and farming in a wider sense.

I came away feeling that in this particular topic, we as farmers are being consulted and listened to unlike in so many areas.

We must continue to improve these discussions because along with finding the right labour to employ in the future,

which was especially welcome. environmental legislation is going to be our other biggest challenge.

As mentioned on the front of this MGA Times, the MGA has a stand at the Agrivision Show at Stoneleigh so I hope this will provide an opportunity to meet up with some of you then.

As I have said before if there are any issues that you wish to discuss with me then please don't hesitate to contact me at any time.

*With my best wishes
David Christensen*

SWITZERLAND VISIT

New Ideas from Swizerland

In September 2001 a group of three MGA Council members, two commercial agronomists and an independent agricultural consultant visited Switzerland to review various environment focused projects and initiatives to ascertain any application possibilities for UK Agriculture.

The trip was, in part, a follow up to previous trips to Switzerland made by MGA members. The conclusions of at least one of these past trips have been written up with the report being available from the MGA Office.

The MGA delegation was led by Charles Moore, Chairman of the MGA Environment Group, and hosted by Christian Bohren of the Swiss Federal Research Station for Agronomy and Agriculture. (Christian gave a presentation at the 2001 MGA Maize Conference).

Subject areas covered during September's intensive two-day tour were as follows:-

- An update on the Rotary Band Maize Drillings (RBMD) system
 - *Workrates, fertiliser and herbicide practices were discussed in more detail.*
 - Contractor experience with RBMD system
 - *Practical farm use as well as cost comparisons were reviewed.*
 - Reduction in the phosphate pollution into three central Swiss lakes
 - *Review of a long-term area based trial successful in reducing Phosphate deposition in Swiss Lakes.*
 - No-till cropping systems
 - *Review of the trial and farm successes/failures of no-till maize and cereal work.*
 - Integrated Farming System
 - *Outline of the Swiss states, environmentally based, farmer payments scheme aimed at compensating farmers for environment enhancement rather than extra production.*
- A full report on the trip is available from the MGA office, please contact Noelle on 01189 761276. Further information is also available from those who made the trip. Charles Moore or John Morgan can be contacted via the MGA office.