



# MGA TIMES

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## KEEP THE WATER IN THE FIELD – ACT RESPONSIBLY!

Given the area of maize harvested in the last few weeks and the inevitable rain that has fallen since and will continue to do so from now on, our attention must turn to managing these fields to minimise run-off and soil erosion. Simon Drapers technical note last month explains in detail how this should be done and if we wish to continue growing maize without further regulation, it is up to us to adhere to this advice.

If no crop is to be sown after the maize and the stubble left over winter, then the least that should be done is to cultivate the field to allow water infiltration, especially on sloping ground. There is no obligation to do this under cross-compliance yet, but it may be an area to highlight under your Soil Protection Review.



For the last three years at Town Barton Farm, the wheat crop that follows maize has been direct drilled into the maize stubble. This last summers wheat crop turned out to be the best yielding for several years, averaging 4 tons/acre over the whole area. The key to the success of this technique has been getting the maize off in dry conditions which has become far easier with early harvesting over the last few seasons. If any obvious compacted areas have arisen during maize harvest, these have been taken out with a chisel plough or sub-soiler.

The main benefit to the business at Town Barton has been the reduced establishment cost by not ploughing (£14—£17/acre), but the less obvious attraction has been timeliness. This year, within 3 weeks of maize harvest, wheat is showing through in rows, keeping the surface of the soil stable before the autumn rains. Better weed control in the maize this year with combinations of the new herbicides has also helped with cleaner stubbles.

## MINERALS UPGRADE OFFERS “PEACE OF MIND”

Following industry feedback and health benefit observations by US nutritionists, we are pleased to announce that the MGA mineral range has been updated in time for this winters feeding period. Key changes made include alterations to the Cobalt, Iodine and Vitamin E levels in the number one selling MGA SuperSpec 200 milking cow mineral, as well as alterations in the iodine and vitamin E levels in the MGA Dry Cow mineral. Formulations of the MGA's two other products, the MGA Youngstock and MGA Grazing mineral, remain unchanged.

We maintain that the MGA range offers peace of mind to those happy to delegate their choice of mineral to the UK's maize and wholecrop specialists. A full explanation of the logic behind the MGA mineral range as well as the full product specs and ordering procedure is enclosed within this mailing. For help with mineral or general nutrition queries please contact the office on 01363 775040.

Direct drilling wheat at Town Barton. 25/09/2006



**TIME FOR A MEASURE UP**

The unusual summer has had a severe impact on grass and in some cases maize silage yields. Now is the time to have a measure up and balance your stocks and needs. John Morgan of the office team provides some pointers to help you sort out the figures. Please see attached note for calculations of fodder stocks.



**DEMO MEETING REPORT**

The meeting held at Town Barton Farm on 14th September was well attended. The morning was spent looking at the demonstration plots, results of which are included in this mailing. There was also a demonstration of a direct drill grass-seeder, considering it was working on the headland it produced a good tilth without too much effort. Compaction of the



**SMUT AT THE NATIONAL DAIRY EVENT**

The MGA Team had two successful days at the National Dairy event. We met quite a few MGA members and also recruited six new members. We featured the Nitrogen predictor as the theme for this year, but actually three maize cobs infected with smut caused much more interest. It was obvious from the response of people walking past our stand and taking a second glance that many had seen this disease in their own maize crops this summer.

Maize smut is very common this year. The disease is a soil borne fungus which attacks damaged tissue in July/August. On most farms this damage came about when the crop suffered from drought stress in the high temperatures of July and therefore it tends to be the most drought prone soil types which have the worst infections.

The maize can still be harvested and fed as the fungus is edible, but not very appetising! Obviously though, the infected cobs and grains feed value are lost and this will be noticeable on a 10% infection (the green plant makes up 30 –50% of the feed value of the clamp).

The only other problem with a large infestation is to get a good consolidated clamp, if you feel you can't achieve this, then an additive may be useful.



soil was also apparent, especially where we had taken slurry up to a higher field during the spring. In fact Simons spade made no impact in one or two places, see picture to the right, highlighting the relevance of subsoiling yet again.

The afternoon session was held at Crediton Rugby club. After Simon



had nearly set the clubhouse on fire with his microwave test on the maize, Chris Savery gave us some very useful advice for feeding this Winter, particularly the importance of consolidating the clamp and keeping waste to a minimum. With silage stocks likely to be in short supply, this advice was all the more relevant. John Morgan then reported on the European Maize meeting, details are included with this mailing. We would like to thank HSBC Bank for their sponsorship and to Tim Archer from the Bank for opening the proceedings.

Your livestock partner



**FREE GRASS OR MAIZE SILAGE ANALYSIS**

BY SAMPLING YOUR SILAGE WE CAN CREATE A CUSTOM MIXED MINERAL FOR THE ANIMALS ON YOUR FARM

For more information, please consult your Masstock contact or call Steve Sanders on 01544 260140

**DIARY DATES**

**Wednesday 18th October**  
MGA/BGS MINI CONFERENCE at Ardingly, Sussex.  
*(contact office for more details)*

**Thursday 16th November**  
MGA GRAIN MAIZE OPEN DAY at Elveden Farms, Suffolk.  
*(Invitation enclosed)*