

Maize remains stable option in volatile times

With price fluctuations and rising costs of production contributing to squeezed margins in many sectors of UK agriculture, stability and consistent performance are words that should offer some confidence to producers.

Maize crops in 2014 have produced some of the highest yields we have ever seen on farm. Warm soils and good spring drilling conditions on the whole allowed maize to get the best possible start. Maize grew very rapidly in the early stages and we witnessed some very tall crops going into the summer with some crops flowering very early.

What looked like being an exceptionally early harvest had the brakes applied with some cooler, damper conditions in August slowing the maturity of the plants and keeping them green.

In September more favourable conditions returned and allowed most maize crops to be harvested in good conditions with the main problem being finding enough clamp space to store it all!

Whether growing for dairy cows, beef cattle or Anaerobic Digestion varietal choice remains critical to ensure that high yields of good quality maize silage are clamped. Growers should choose a variety with good cob ripeness to optimise dry matter and starch contents and ensure the crop is harvested when required.

Remember that Grainseed trial varieties from many breeders to select the very best, consistent performers for our changeable UK growing conditions.

As well as putting varieties through the NIAB system we also run breeders UK pre Descriptive List trials, our own replicated UK development trials and over 40 farm scale trials.

In addition we also look at the latest developments in seed dressings, fertiliser and foliar products as well as all aspects of maize growing and management.

Please find enclosed your 2015 maize variety guide with technical descriptions of the key varieties for this coming season including:

- **Es Ardent- Maturity (11) Cob Ripeness (8) Stay Green (6)**

High yielding Ultra Early variety, suitable for marginal sites where a good combination of grain maturity and plant dry down is required.

Very consistent performance on farm.

- **Es Ballade- Maturity (8) Cob Ripeness (8) Stay Green (7)**

Very stable “bomb proof” variety, suitable to be grown on all favourable and less favourable sites across a large part of the country.

Top selling variety- consistent year after year.

- **Cathy- Maturity (7) Cob Ripeness (7) Stay Green (8)**

New high yielding NIAB candidate variety, suitable for favourable sites where maximising dry matter yield is required.

Very consistent yields across sites and over three contrasting growing years.



Please do not hesitate to contact us if you would like further information on any of our “Bred for Britain” varieties.

Early maize silage analysis results positive

Many maize clamps across the country have been analysed now and the preliminary results being reported by Trouw Nutrition GB are at the optimum 31% Dry Matter and 31% Starch for clamping and feeding. Cob and grain yields are high resulting in high starch yields per hectare, but the very large bulky plants harvested this year will have had a dilution effect on starch levels hence the reduction from 2014.

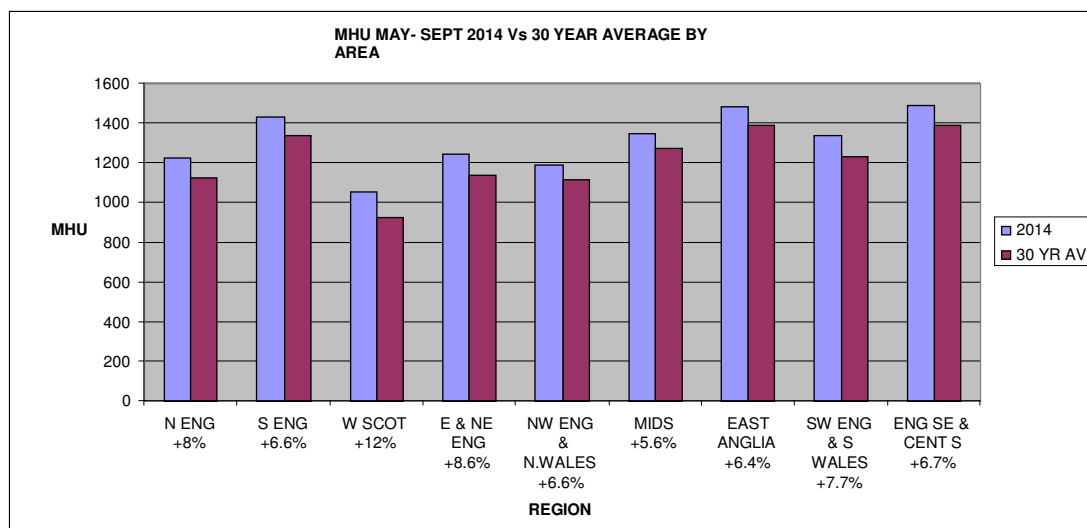
	<u>2008</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2012</u>	<u>2013</u>	<u>2014</u>	Difference
<u>Dry Matter %</u>	28.1	30.4	32.0	33.1	29.5	30.8	31.2	+0.4
<u>ME</u>	10.8	11.3	11.1	11.4	11.2	11.4	11.3	-0.1
<u>Starch %</u>	24.5	27.6	27.7	28.5	27.6	34.5	30.6	-3.9

Source: Frank Wright Trouw Nutrition GB Early Season Silage Analysis

This good quality maize will be a valuable addition to the ration this winter and could help increase performance and offset any problems caused by this years variable grass silage. In order to maintain good rumen health regular silage sampling will be required to monitor the quality of the silage.

Sensible variety choice still critical

On the back of a very good year for maize it is always tempting to push for that little extra yield. However the maize heat unit (MHU) analysis for 2014 showed us that in all parts of the UK we had a much higher accumulation of MHU than the 30 year average- as much as +12% in some areas.



We must always look to the average year for our varietal choices and choosing a variety that looks a little higher yielding on paper may be false economy if it has poorer cob ripeness or is too late a maturity class for geographical conditions. This may effect starch and dry matter levels and ultimately reduce the potential performance of your maize silage.

Where possible use local trial data and experience to help make your varietal choices.

Wireworm control for 2015

2014 saw minimal plant losses from soil borne pests in part due to the favourable spring whereby most maize crops grew vigorously away from any pest attack. However growers still need to be aware of any potential pest problems for 2015 and act accordingly.

We anticipate that we will have a limited number of varieties available treated with Sonido for drilling 2015 so please book your requirements early.