

Maize harvest full swing

	Drill date	Ht aboveA sea level (m)	Crop dry matter 2 October	Increase from last week
Petworth, Sussex	4 May	50	Harvested	
Harleston, Norfolk	2 May	30	Harvested	
Crediton, Devon	25 April	118	Harvested	
Ticknall, Derbyshire	1 May	67	23.3	+ 2.7
Llandeilo, Carmarthenshire*	4 May	32	31.4	+ 3.1
SRUC, Dumfries, Scotland PLASTIC	30 April	45	27.1	+ 3.2
SRUC, Dumfries, Scotland*	30 April	45	24.0	+ 1.6

Variety Es Picker, all other sites are Es Ballade. Variety under plastic Es Marco.

Maize harvest is progressing well in many areas now suggests Neil Groom Technical Director for Grainseed Ltd. "We have seen a big change in the crop maturity in the last week with plants drying down and senescing to catch up with the early grain maturity we have experienced this autumn."

As we travel the country it's clear that maize has been the saviour on many livestock farms with high yields of mature silage. "Last week growers were reporting some effluent run in green crops but now this has stopped as growers harvest fully mature maize. Following last autumn it's understandable growers wish to start harvest early when conditions are dry, especially if hauling along a road, but optimum dry matters of 30% are only now being achieved."

This is the first season when we have seen 3 sites cut in the same week and all 3 growers are reporting high yields.

John Hancock sampling for Farmers Weekly near Petworth in Sussex has recorded yields over 25t/acre on some fertile meadow land that has historically been heavily grazed. " We had a big bulky plant and superb cobs and the 6 acre meadow did 13 loads which is fantastic. All my maize is good this year and even the maize I drilled after cutting Italian ryegrasses at the beginning of April will produce over 15t/ acre which added to the 8t/acre I had from the clamp filler is good and we have even got it drilled with wheat for next years grain too."

Neil agrees with Johns policy "Land is one of your biggest assets and needs to be growing a crop to make you money. There are lot of acres out there which could be farmed more intensively and whilst theres a plant in the soil it's catching sunlight and nutrients and building dry matter to feed. Soil temperatures are still high and any seed sown will rapidly germinate and grow and there is an opportunity to drill grass seeds for at least another week and corn for another month.

Remember check the chop length of the maize coming into the clamp. Some growers want fine chop and others long chop so unless you tell the chopper driver he can't set the machine right. Keep rolling the clamp if if there's space get a second tractor on the clamp to double the weight rolling the silage into the clamp. Sheet well with an airtight cover and cover with a secure cover type net paying particular attention to the shoulders of the clamp where it's hardest to get good consolidation.

If the weather does break and your cutting maize following rain then be ready before the contractor arrives. Many harvesting teams will operate a sweeper to keep roads clear of mud, but put some signs up too so road users are aware of slippery conditions before they get to the gateway. If your able to bring the trailers along tracks or across grass fields to clean of the mud it often reduces the amount of soil brought onto the road. Keep the apron of the clamp clean too, we don't want soil from trailers going into the pit.