



Belmont Game Maize Growers Guide

Seedbed Preparation

The correct preparation of your game plots is essential to growing a good crop of game cover maize. Prior to cultivation an application of Farm Yard Manure to the area will be of great benefit to a strong crop of maize.

The plot should be ploughed sufficiently deep to ensure no localised soil compaction remains.

If the soil is heavier bodied aim to progressively achieve a 70% seedbed, leaving a single cultivation pass immediately prior to drilling to create a fine firm seedbed.

If weeds have germinated prior to final cultivation, spray with Roundup at 3-4 litres per hectare to achieve a clean start.

Drilling

Maize and Maize mixes should be sown between early May and the end of June. The two most important factors which must be present for good establishment are:-

1. Available soil moisture
2. Soil temperature must be 8 degrees and rising.

Drilling Depth

The crop should be sown at least 5cm deep but can be drilled up to 10 cm if the soil moisture level is deeper during dry conditions, deeper drilling reduces the possibility of damage by crows etc.

Seed Rate

Establishment percentage is a key factor in determining seed rate, the aim should be to establish a plant stand of between 38-43,000 plants per acre. Plant populations greater than this can lead to delayed maturity and susceptibility to lodging.

The seed rate should be increased where seedbed conditions are difficult i.e. on heavy clay soils where or crop establishment may be only 50-70%..

Row Width

Spacing should be 40-80 cm to allow game birds to move within the crop.

Partner Crops

Sorghum may be sown as a windbreak around the windward side of cover blocks, it can also be used as a flushing strip within the crop.

Millet may be under sown within the crop to reduce the effects of cold winds and to provide feed interest for the birds.

Sunflowers may be admixed to maize seed, enabling the crop to be entered as wild bird cover for IACS purposes if required. NB residual herbicides are not permitted under this option.



Weed Control

Controlling weeds by chemical means within maize cover is dictated by a number of factors:-

1. Presence of moisture in the seedbed.
2. Predominant weed problems.
3. Inclusion of partner crops.

Weed control programmes are based around two main residual herbicides, Atrazine (Gesatop) and Pendimethalin (Stomp).

Follow up weed control can be achieved with the following products dependant upon weeds present:-

Shield 6 Controls Mayweed and Thistles.

Starane 6 Apply pre development of aerial roots, 7 leaves unfolded, for cleavers, chickweed, hempnettle and suppression of docks.

It is important to seek advice from a B.A.S.I.S qualified person before applying any chemical weed control. Our own company agronomist John Brook can be contacted for advice on the following numbers (01522) 694478 or mobile 07900 194052.

Fertiliser

Before planting your crop you should ensure that the pH levels of the soil are at the optimum 6.0 - 7.0, maize growth will be severely constrained at levels below 5.5 pH

RB 209 Guidelines Rates in kg/ha of plant food.

Index	0	1	2	2+
N	120	80	80	
P	110	85	60	60
K	220	205	180	155

Where placement drills are used Mon Ammonium Phosphate applied down the spout is an ideal product as it will promote vigorous early development of the crop.

Low levels of available phosphate are a major source of poor establishment, ensure you know your soil levels, if in doubt carry out a soil test prior to drilling.

If Nitrogen is applied as a straight product, the timing should be pre-drilling or early post emergence.

When high levels of organic manure have been applied the need for seedbed P & K may be removed.

Magnesium is an important element in maize, low levels of available magnesium can restrict growth and limit the standing potential of the crop, check your soil analysis if you are not sure. Magnesium can be supplemented by an application of Bittersalts Magnesium to the foliage through a conventional sprayer.

The above are the basic outlines of maize growing, we are always available to discuss individual problems and will help in any way we can to enable you to achieve successful game cover crops.

If you need further advice please ring Paul on 01652 629042 or fax your queries on 01652 629043.