

# forage bites

Helping you farm more forage



ISSUE TWO



The cold, dry spring brought many challenges, delaying grass growth and jeopardising maize drilling. It also impacted the timing of weed control; this year pre-emergence spraying falling at least a week or two behind normal. But with high feed costs, the pressure to produce high quality forage is on and time-critical weed control is an integral part. So, to help you make the best decisions at the right time, check out our new forage app below. This issue of Forage Bites also brings you the latest news on the critical areas of forage management - Sow, Nurture, Improve - all helping you FarmMoreForage.

## New Forage app – coming soon

The new Corteva Agriscience forage app is due for launch in June and provides 24/7 access to expert agronomy advice and resources to maximise homegrown forage.

Once launched, the app will be available to download for free and is packed with advice and decision-making tools to help identify the best seed and crop protection solutions for growing the optimum quality and quantity forage for your livestock.

Features available in the Forage App include:

- Tool to define the best time to take action, such as spraying docks
- Decision tree to decide on the benefit of a silage inoculant or a weed

control solution

- Product directory on what to use for a specific weed problem
- Guide on maize varieties best suited to a particular need
- Access to newsletters featuring seasonal advice, new product development and expert opinion
- Product information including label details

The forage app is a central part of our FarmMoreForage initiative and provides a framework for improving the quality and quantity of homegrown forage based around three phases of production easily influenced by farmers - Sow, Nurture, Improve.



# Cold spell delays maize planting

**In mid-April, average soil temperatures were too low for drilling maize and the dry weather rendered the land unworkable. Drilling had only started under film in some areas.**

Temperature is paramount for maize and its seed needs soil temperatures to be above 10°C to grow. Average soil temperatures were well under that in April, and several degrees below comparative readings in the previous four years. The unseasonably low single figures at night meant soil temperatures were slow to rise. During this critical period, Corteva works with farmers in major maize-growing areas to measure weekly soil temperatures and offer specialist advice on when best to drill. Temperatures are taken at the daily temperature mid-point of 10am and at a typical drilling depth of 2.5cm.

All Pioneer's maize seed undergoes the 'Pioneer Stress Test' and are tolerant of soil temperatures down to 10°C. This test offers farmers the reassurance they need

to drill when soil temperatures reach the minimum level, but not before. As well as inhibiting growth, drilling into cold seedbeds increases the risk of Pythium causing seed and root rot.

"If you're keen to harvest before the colder weather at the end of the growing season, early planting is not the answer. Choosing a variety with an earlier flowering date is a better solution," advises Simon Preece, Corteva Promoter in SW England and South Wales.

Pioneer's earliest maturing variety, P7326, gives good, early yields of high-quality silage. It can be grown in almost all conditions, including colder locations; its reliability making it Pioneer's biggest-selling variety. For those wanting a dent-type variety, producing silage easier for rumen bacteria to degrade, P7034 has been bred specifically for our cool, maritime conditions. Both varieties continue to show encouraging results in the on-going PACTS® trials, testing varieties in a range of conditions.



## Nature

# NEW Grassland herbicide packaging

**New look, but same reliable and effective product.**

All Corteva grassland herbicides are now in new blue-topped packaging replacing the previous green tops and darker containers. You will begin seeing this new branding filter through into the marketplace as older stock is replaced.



# Weed emergence table

Use our handy 'go-to' guide for all you need to know about when the common problem weeds are likely to appear in your grassland.

Month	Period	Chickweed	Dandelions	Buttercups	Docks	Thistles	Nettles	Ragwort	New sown leys
March	Early								
	Mid								
	Late								
April	Early								
	Mid								
	Late								
May	Early								
	Mid								
	Late								
June	Early								
	Mid								
	Late								
July	Early								
	Mid								
	Late								
August	Early								
	Mid								
	Late								
September	Early								
	Mid								
	Late								
October	Early								
	Mid								
	Late								

## Don't leave it too late to control buttercups

Buttercups are more likely to be a problem in mature pastures, causing both skin and stomach irritation in livestock if eaten in large quantities. Controlling buttercups and other weeds in mature leys helps improve their productivity and feed value.

**But don't wait until a field has turned yellow! Spraying when buttercups are flowering could limit a spray's effectiveness by up to 10%.** For the best control, look for signs of emerging buttercups and spray while they are growing actively.

If you spray when buttercups are flowering, be aware of pollinators, such as bees, butterflies and hoverflies. Corteva grassland herbicides are not harmful to insects but follow best practice by spraying when pollinators are less active, such as morning or evening.

For the best overall control of buttercups, use [Envy®](#) or [Leystar®](#) before flowering at 2.0 litres/ha in at least 200 litres of water per ha. In fields with a substantial buttercup problem, consider extending the grazing interval from 7 days to 14 days.



## Dock control after first cut

If you missed the chance to control docks before first cut, there's still time. Two or three weeks after first cut, catch the recovering docks with fresh, healthy leaves, large enough for sufficient exposure, but with root stocks weakened by the previous cutting. There's also less grass around post cutting making them easier targets.

Docks need to be sprayed with a translocated herbicide, like [Doxstar<sup>®</sup> Pro](#), when growing actively and the size of dinner plates (approx. 20cm across). Doxstar Pro must be applied using a boom sprayer at a rate of 2 litres/ha in 300-400 litres of water.

Like all weed control, timing is important. Too early, when the leaves are small, and not enough herbicide is taken up to kill the roots. Too late, when the plants have gone to head, and insufficient chemical reaches the roots.

Docks grow fast and can dominate a pasture all too easily, their large, deep taproots making them able to survive grazing and cutting. An infestation of just 10% can reduce yield by the same amount so it makes financial sense to address populations of any size.



## Control ragwort early to avoid lengthy disruptions to grazing

Common ragwort is poisonous to most livestock but cutting is not a recommended way to remove it as cut plants are particularly palatable and attractive to grazing animals. Cutting also encourages new and vigorous regrowth. Ragwort should be controlled with an effective herbicide, such as [Forefront<sup>®</sup> T](#) during early, active growth when the plant is rosette shaped and close to the ground.

After an initial application of Forefront T, a follow-up treatment may be required if there are plants at different growth stages. Controlling ragwort early is essential. Once it flowers and sets seed, it can spread quickly and become out of hand.

Treating ragwort early also means the grazing interval is shorter as smaller, younger plants decay more rapidly. Grazing livestock must be kept out of the field until the ragwort has died and rotted

fully. This can take up to 6 or 7 weeks and could be longer if spraying is left until the plants have matured.

Due to manure stewardship requirements, Forefront T is not permitted for use on grassland grazed by animals other than cattle or sheep, or for grass being cut for forage.



## Dandelions

Dandelions can also be a problem weed in mature pastures. **They are palatable to livestock but are not nutritionally valuable** and reduce the overall productivity of grassland.

Dandelions should be controlled in a similar way to buttercups by using [Envy](#) or [Leystar](#) before flowering at a rate of 2.0L/ha in 200L water/ha.



## Cold, dry April impacts grass growth

April 2021 was both the coldest since 1922 and the sunniest on record. The dry and frosty conditions meant much slower grass growth. And, despite a wet Early May Bank Holiday, first cut has been affected and delayed on many farms to allow grass growth to catch up. The record-breaking weather means silage inoculants, more than ever, are important in helping to produce the best quality silage.

With the slower grass growth seen this spring, nitrogen (N) applications may not have been fully utilised producing grass with high N levels. This can result in silage with high ammonia and butyric acid levels, leading to protein degradation, making it less palatable and depressing

feed intakes.

In addition, the relatively high levels of UV-radiation and low night-time temperatures we've experienced, mean we expect to see low levels of naturally occurring lactic acid bacteria, critical for making quality silage.

To counter this, silage inoculants containing homofermentative bacteria, such as [1188](#) or [11G22](#), are recommended to reduce the risk of butyric acid fermentation impacting silage quality and preventing poor performance from forage.

**Silage inoculants have an important role to play whatever the weather conditions** – they are not just an

insurance policy if the weather is bad. Rapidly and well fermented silage with no yeast or mould and sufficiently high dry matter content gives a better feed value and drives intakes. **Using the right inoculant in the right circumstances can see your forage quality reach new heights.**



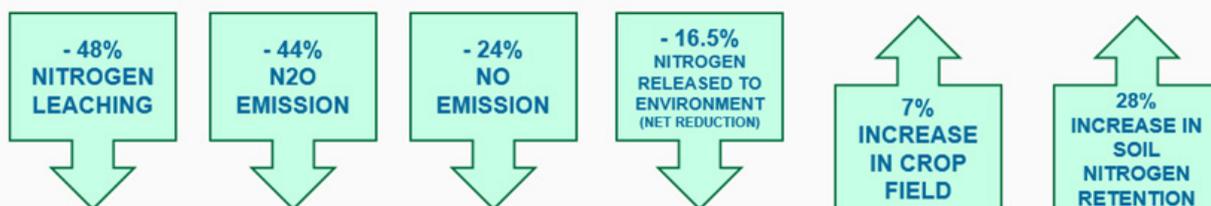
## Nitrogen stabilisers can play a key role in reducing farm carbon footprint

Reducing nitrogen use on farms and nitrate levels in water, are critical elements of the continued drive to improve the sustainability of agriculture. The nitrogen stabiliser, Optinyte, helps meet both the demand for improved water quality and a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions from fertiliser. Optinyte works by slowing down the

conversion of ammonium to nitrate, preventing nitrogen loss through leaching and denitrification. Optinyte has been shown to reduce nitrogen losses through leaching by up to 50% and through greenhouse gases by 45%, delivering a clear environmental benefit. As well as these significant environmental benefits from nitrogen

being kept in the soil for longer, Optinyte can significantly improve crop quality and yields. It requires a single application of 2.5l/ha, typically through a crop sprayer, either alone or with herbicides or UAN. It can also be added to slurry spread before ploughing.

### BENEFITS OF OPTINYTE™ TECHNOLOGY



#### ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS

- Stabilised nitrogen reduces leaching or loss from denitrification
- Less nitrate loss into waterways
- Reduces emissions of greenhouse gases (GHG) into the atmosphere

#### CROP BENEFITS

- Nitrogen remains available in the root zone longer for crop uptake
- Increased yield in maize, cereals, and many other crops
- Improves crop quality and plant health

  
**PROTECT THE ENVIRONMENT**  
Reduce nitrate and GHG losses

  
**GREATER PRODUCTIVITY**  
Maximise yield

  
**IMPROVED EFFICIENCY**  
Keep nitrogen in the root zone

## Ask a question

**Q** Can I spray buttercups when they are flowering?

**A** Although it is possible to spray buttercups when flowering it is not advised. It is less effective, limiting control by 10%. For the best control, use Envy or Leystar while the plant is growing actively before flowering.

**Q** Is it too late to spray docks after first cut?

**A** No, it isn't too late. Spray with Doxstar® Pro, 2-3 weeks after first cut, to catch the recovering docks with fresh, healthy leaves the size of dinner plates (approx. 20cm across).

**Q** When is the best time to spray ragwort?

**A** The best control of ragwort is achieved when it is sprayed during early, active growth, when the plant is rosette shaped and close to the ground. Delaying herbicide application makes control harder and results in lengthy delays to the grazing interval.

**Q** How can I improve my silage with this poor start to the cutting season?

**A** Sunny days and cold nights result in lower levels of the lactic acid vital for good silage making. To counter this, a silage inoculant containing homofermentative bacteria, such as 1188 or 11G22, is recommended to aid lactic acid production from sugars.

## Meet the Forage Team

Our local area managers and forage specialists based throughout the UK are here to help with technical and product enquiries.

Forage Bites caught up with Jonathan Bellamy, based in North Wales, Central England and Northern Ireland. After graduating from Harper Adams with an agriculture degree, Jonathan has spent his whole career working in seed and agronomy-based roles; the last 29 years with Corteva Agriscience.

"The weather plays a big role in farming and regional differences can be significant. Being based regionally means we can respond to specific issues seen by local suppliers and farmers. By talking to someone local they know we can relate to their particular challenges.

"At the moment I'm talking to agronomists, reps and farmers about silage inoculants and the circumstances on individual farms, working out which additives are best. With delays to first cut, we're discussing how to manage the N and sugar levels in lots of grass. And the best products for wet silage given the heavy rain recently.

"The phone is also ringing with concerns about slow-emerging maize already in the ground and for advice on planting conditions where it's yet to be sown.

"Our role is to support and advise however we can. We encourage customers to pick up the phone and see how we can help maximise their forage potential."

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## Technical Hotline

For queries on weed control in grassland, maize and forage crops, use of silage inoculants, selecting a maize hybrid to match your situation, please contact our technical hotline.

**0800 689 8899**

[ukhotline@corteva.com](mailto:ukhotline@corteva.com)

Discover more at [corteva.co.uk](http://corteva.co.uk)

USE PLANT PROTECTION PRODUCTS SAFELY. Always read the label and product information before use. For further information including warning phrases and symbols refer to label.

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Doxstar® Pro contains triclopyr and fluroxypyr. Leystar® contains fluroxypyr, clopyralid and florasulam.



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