



Maize Association Chair's Report, 2016/17 - Harley Bligh



At our AGM last year, we saw the retirement from the committee of Glen Tankard from Ingredion and Andrew Jurgs from Emerald Grains. On behalf of the MAA I wish to thank them for their commitment to our organisation. We also

welcomed new committee members; Jason Scott from Pioneer and Adam Robinson from Robinson Grains.

The 2013 Strategic Plan stated that our aim was to raise corn production in Australia to 1 million tonnes per annum, prompting this year's main activity; our inaugural irrigated and dry land yield competition.

This competition, to my knowledge, is the only truly national yield competition within the grains industry. We decided to establish this competition in a similar fashion to the National Crop Competition in the USA. The results of our winning crops and their agronomic practices will be widely disseminated amongst our growing community. This will hopefully assist in the adoption of new and innovative techniques leading to higher overall yields being achieved.

We launched the competition with media releases etc. in December last year, but I think Christmas festivities overtook the release and the launch was poorly reported; for this we apologize. This year we intend to promote and advertise through the seed industry and resellers, also hopefully generating a lot more media coverage, starting today with the presentation of this year's inaugural winners; Nathan Heckendorf of Narrandera won the irrigated yield with 18.36 tonnes per hectare and Paul Elsdon of Brookstead took out the highest dry land yield with 8.51 tonnes per hectare. The MAA wishes to thank our main sponsor Netafim for the generous prize money to attract entrants to the competition.

The Cob magazine

The Cob magazine is a major form of communication with our membership. We have moved to a digital format in lieu of a hard copy to save costs such as printing and postage, and also took the production in-house; for this we thank our EO Liz Mann, as the financial saving to the organisation is immense. However, it is challenging for Liz, trying to source articles from people who have agreed to provide them; I am sure she feels it's like getting blood from a stone. Hopefully this will improve in the forthcoming year.

Membership

It is of great concern to the committee that our active fee-paying membership seems to be falling away. Keeping the relevance of the MAA at the forefront of our industry participants seems to be

an ever increasingly hard task, for reasons that are hard to fathom; perhaps it is because there aren't any burning issues like we have had in the past, such as aflatoxins causing us to lose share in the pet food market. The MAA has been very involved in creating the export market to North Asia, for our non-GMO corn, but momentum seems hard to achieve for a variety of reasons, including the A\$ dollar, and very large corn crops in the USA and South America making the premiums we need for our corn too big a stretch for our Asian customers.

Corn Production in Australia

Our 2013 Strategic Plan stated that we aim to produce 1 million tonnes of Maize in Australia by 2017. That hasn't happened for many reasons. We do seem to have a very stable domestic requirement for corn in Australia, and there doesn't appear to be any new players in the processing industry requiring any increased tonnages to be produced. As I stated, the export market in North Asia has recognised that our Australian-bred hybrids suit their requirements for quality, and our ability to supply non-GMO is a definite advantage but, owing to the large volumes produced in North & South America, we struggle to compete on price.

Also, last year saw a cutback in the demand for high-moisture corn into feedlots, mainly through competition from cheaper wheat prices resulting from last year's excellent wheat harvest. Probably the biggest issues facing corn production are water availability and cost together with a favourable cotton price which has seen corn acreage swing to cotton as farmers chase higher returns per megalitre of water. Dryland production will always be out-competed by sorghum because of Australia's dry climate.

As I shall not be seeking a further term as Chair, reviewing the last 4 years the MAA is now in a sound financial position, primarily due to the changes we have initiated with our teleconferencing in lieu of face to face meetings, thus saving on travel and accommodation expenses. In addition, bringing The Cob in-house and converting to a digital format has also saved the organisation substantially. The summer grains conference remains our main source of income.

Going forward, I invite the new committee to revisit the strategic plan to ensure the MAA is performing to its maximum potential. Communication with and relevance to our members will always be an issue. However, I believe the MAA committee represents all facets of our industry - including growers, merchants, seed companies, shippers and processors - giving the maize industry a strong voice to government and also keeping research priorities highlighted. To that end we look forward to the presentation from GRDC today.

In closing I wish to thank my fellow committee members for their shared wisdom and commitment

to our industry which they give so freely, also recognising the contribution of their respective companies for the time they spend on MAA matters. Lastly, but most importantly, I thank our EO Liz Mann for her ongoing effort and commitment to the MAA. Liz has an extremely busy role in the processing tomato industry as well as with the On-Farm Irrigation Efficiency Program - as they say if you want something done give it to a busy person and Liz truly exemplifies this.

Thank you

FREE
Membership of the
MAA for growers
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In this issue

Netafim's New Mobile App NetMaize	2
Inaugural MAA Maize Competition	3
Growing Maize for Grain in Tasmania	5
New Research is Showing that Defoliation May Have Advantageous Effects on Maize Yields in a Range of Environments	6
GRDC Supports Summer Crop Pathology Activities in the Centre for Crop Health at USQ	7
On-farm Storage of Maize	8
Maize Exports from Kununurra, WA	9
Major Changes to Crop Program at Pilton	10
Corn Goes From Opportunity to Regular Crop at Echuca	11
Corn Key to Closed-Loop Deniliquin Piggyery	12
Perennially Record Production and What the Future Holds	13
Coring Peaked Corn in Grain Bins: What Are Best Practises?	14
2017/2018 National Maize Yield Competition	15
MAA Activities Over The Past 12 Months	15

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Netafim's New Mobile App NetMaize Combines Real-Time Data to Maximize Water Efficiency

Netafim, the global leader in drip irrigation, recently announced the release of a powerful new mobile app that provides corn growers who use drip irrigation with access to customized irrigation protocols and the agronomic expertise needed to boost crop productivity and reduce overall water use.

The App is free to download for both iPhone and Android users, the NetMaize app combines farmer inputs such as planting time, soil type, field location, and irrigation system configuration, with global weather data to provide a tailored drip irrigation program for corn growers. By streamlining the management of variables affecting overall crop productivity, growers are able to better forecast the irrigation needs of their corn crop and maintain precision control over the root zone environment during the plant's critical growth stages.

In addition to real-time irrigation scheduling, NetMaize's one-touch sharing function allows growers to instantly send current field data and logs to a crop consultant or Netafim agronomist for review or use in a more comprehensive agronomic plan. "Simply put, nobody understands their field better than the farmer.

By combining grower knowledge with local weather data and more than five decades of Netafim agronomic expertise, NetMaize gives corn farmers the information they need to get the most out of their drip irrigation system," said Lior Peleg, Head of Strategic Solutions at Netafim. The NetMaize app enables growers to obtain the benefits of drip irrigation, maintaining optimal uniform soil moisture levels, root zone aeration, improved plant health while maximizing water efficiency.

Developed by Netafim's team of agronomists and drawing on more than 50 years of experience in drip irrigation, NetMaize requires only a few simple steps to get started. The app uses a clean, easy-to-read app interface and communicates input instructions, information and irrigation requirements in a clear and simple manner, allowing farmers to make quicker and more informed decisions about the irrigation needs of their crop.

"It is like having a drip irrigation expert in your pocket at all times," added Peleg.

The NetMaize app is free to download and available through the Apple iTunes Store for iPhone and the Google Play Store for Android.



Nathan Heckendorf, of Narrandera, receiving his award for the highest yielding maize crop from Mitchell Carter, from Netafim and Bernie Walsh, new MAA Chair.



Inaugural MAA Maize Competition

A maize crop grown on the property of Nathan Heckendorf, of Narrandera, in southern New South Wales, has taken out the irrigated section of the inaugural National Maize Competition.

Nathan Heckendorf's crop of Pioneer® hybrid P1756 was yield tested at 18.36 tonnes per hectare.

Paul Elsden, of Brookstead in southern Queensland, won the dryland competition with Pioneer® hybrid P1467 at an adjusted yield of 8.51 tonnes per hectare.

Nathan Heckendorf said it was the highest corn yield they had ever achieved on the property and it was a trial with planting populations that provided a boost. Their best result before was 17.6 tonnes with 80,000 seeds per hectare. This year they had two pivots at 80,000, one at 82,000 and one at 85,000. According to Nathan the corn planted at 82,000 seeds per hectare was brilliant. The cobs were 44 to 46 kernels long and 18 kernels round. The extra 2000 seeds per hectare made all the difference."

The winning entry was in the field planted at 82,000 seeds per hectare and was half a tonne per hectare better than the other areas.

Nathan said his fertiliser program was also important in achieving high corn yields and included an up-front broadcast of urea at 450 kilograms per hectare and MAP at 280 kilograms per hectare. A pop-up fertiliser with phosphorous, nitrogen and zinc and Kelpak seaweed extract was applied at seeding to feed the plants in the first two weeks. "Corn sets its yield in the first four weeks so nutrition early is important," Nathan said.

When the crop was between V4 and V5 growth stages it was inter-row cultivated with a single tyne in the middle of the 36-inch rows.

Urea at a rate of 350 kilograms per hectare was placed at a depth of 30cm. Nathan says that "The roots realise that it is there and concentrate on going down. It is used at pre-tasselling and grain-fill."

Last year the maize also had a foliar application of boron, copper and zinc and this next season a sulphur product is being considered at early tasselling to try and increase yields even further.

Nathan is targeting 19 tonnes per hectare in his mind and in his program

Last year's winning crop was planted on November 8 and harvested on May 18, with just 6.3 megalitres per hectare of water used through the summer.

Ian Hamono, of Cooma, in northern Victoria was placed second in the irrigated section with a yield of 17.05 tonnes per hectare from Pioneer® hybrid P1414.

Ian grew his corn on Netafim sub-surface irrigation which helped provide the crop with the correct amount of water at the right time. "Throughout the growing season water is available according to plant needs."

He said last year's crop was one of the tallest and

most consistent he had ever grown and the sub-surface drip also provided benefits in terms of fertigation and savings with both time and power. Sub-surface irrigation has worked well for Mr Hamono and others chasing high, consistent maize yields.

The Australian record for corn at 21 tonnes per hectare was set during the 2004/05 season at Boort in northern Victoria on Netafim sub-surface irrigation.

Paul Elsden, of Brookstead, QLD said the winning dryland crop was an amazing result considering the late planting date of January 5 and a seeding rate of 32,000 per hectare.

He said the paddock was fallowed through from wheat and had initially been fertilised for cotton but dry conditions meant it was put into maize. Shortly after planting conditions turned dry and a "just in time" rainfall event helped the roots reach the good subsoil moisture.

The maize was harvested as high moisture grain on June 8 and transported to a feedlot near the town of Texas in southern Queensland. Paul said the high moisture grain option was preferred for their late corn as it allowed them to harvest at between 25 and 34 per cent moisture.

He said yields from the paddock were up over 10 tonnes per hectare at the higher moisture which equated to the adjusted yield of 8.51 tonnes per hectare which won the crop competition.

Corn is a major summer crop option on the property and is grown under irrigation early and as a viable dryland option on the late plant.

Twin rows and one metre spacings are normally utilised for earlier canopy closure although the

winning crop was in a single row configuration as the planter could reach a depth of three inches.

Paul said the crop received 250 to 300 kilograms per hectare of urea and nothing afterwards and benefited from good rainfall and a lack of frosts during the season. He said the high moisture corn was an excellent option and what their late crops were aimed towards.

The earlier crops generally consisted of Pioneer® hybrid P1756 which provided both processing and feed options at harvest.

"I think we are quite good with our weed management and our management practices are seeing regular increases from corn," Paul said. They are achieving a ten per cent increase in yield per year which is one tonne per hectare or better.

First prize in the irrigation category was sponsored by Netafim and included airfares and accommodation to the value of \$5000 to attend an overseas event to increase knowledge regarding the maize industry.

Netafim is the World leader in smart irrigation systems and has been providing drip systems to maize growers in Australia for a number of years. The application of drip irrigation in maize enables the precise application of water and fertiliser, achieving a reduction in these inputs whilst also increasing yield.

The dryland category was sponsored by the Maize Association of Australia with a prize of \$2500 for a similar domestic or overseas event.

Mr Harley Bligh, Chairman of the Maize Association of Australia congratulated the winners and challenged maize growers throughout Australia to enter the competition in 2018 and attempt to beat these yield levels.



Nathan Heckendorf, of Narrandera, in southern NSW, took out the irrigated section of inaugural National Maize Competition with a yield of 18.36 tonnes per hectare.



Harvesting the 17.05 tonnes per hectare from Pioneer® hybrid P1414, irrigated via sub-surface drip irrigation at Hamono's property



Ilan Hamono in his 17.05 tonnes per hectare maize crop (photo from The Weekly Times)



Paul Elsdon, of Brookstead in southern QLD took out the dryland section of the National Maize Competition with a yield of 8.51 tonnes per hectare.

Growing Maize for Grain in Tasmania By David Coddington, HSR Seeds

The Tasmanian Maize market is at present made up of 100% of the crop grown for silage in the dairy industry. This, I believe has the potential to grow with a burgeoning grain industry. Unfortunately, it may take the downturn in the "poppy growing industry" for this to occur, as summer irrigators begin looking for an alternative crop to grow. This cropping opportunity can potentially be filled with maize grown for grain. However, it comes with some limitations in the short term with a distinct lack of grain dryers and storage space for the harvested crop in Tasmania.

Currently 15,000 to 30,000 tonnes of maize grain is shipped across from mainland Australia to fill the demand created by the intensive animal industries; in particular dairy, pig and chicken producers. There are grain freight subsidies in place for the Tasmanian Agricultural industry, but I am sure that, providing it is cost neutral to the alternative, most producers would prefer to grow and consume higher quality, locally produced maize grain.

Maize for grain can and has been grown successfully already in small trial plot areas of 1 to 5 hectares, with yields from the fastest maturing genetics in the Australian market yielding above 10 t/Ha (Let's work on 10 t/Ha for this exercise). Given that this grain can be marketed for between \$270 - \$370 per tonne to the feed grain suppliers, I will let you do the sums.

Sowing time would be when the soil temperature reaches 12 degrees Celsius at 10cm depth at a standard 9.00am every morning consistently. Mostly this occurs between the last week in October and the second week in November in the Tasmanian environment. Harvest would occur as soon as the crop can be taken and dried to a 12% moisture level economically; my estimate would be to harvest at around 18-17% moisture of the grain.

If Tasmanian grain growers can produce at least half of the state's requirements, that is around 15,000 tonnes of grain, this would equate to a cropping area of 1,500 Ha yielding 10 t/Ha. This by no means is exhaustive or a lot to ask, as I believe that the overall usage pattern and demand would then increase in total. It would certainly make a grain industry worth being involved in as a fantastic business opportunity. I see a good fit in the central northern midlands, from Launceston to Oatlands as the number of new overhead irrigators increases, "popping up" on any available land with irrigation water, but this is not limited to any area already growing maize silage or poppies either.

Maize is a very good "cleaning crop" due to the different herbicides and usage patterns and can be grown very successfully in rotation with lucerne and other hay and silage crops.

It also stands well and can be stored in the paddock for extended periods without loss of quality. As a crop, maize is a big user of nitrogen, but is also a lazy feeder of nitrogen, leaving a very solid base nutrition for immediately following crops.

As I said earlier there are some limitations to this as maize requires a total "Heat unit" accumulation of around 1300 - 1500 "Day Degrees" to reach physiological maturity or "Black Layer". This means growing it requires the fastest maturing (and by nature yield limiting) genetics available. However agronomically, we can play with a few tricks to speed the process up like "seed soaking" (for faster emergence under cooler conditions), desiccation of the crop, and also grain drying. A "Row crop or Snapper front" for a conventional header would make for a cleaner sample and also give less harvest losses, and reduced harvest moisture. These harvest fronts are currently non-existent on the island, and would have to be shipped over by a producer or a contractor. Budgeting on getting the grain dried would be an extra burden, but a necessity, and large volumes of grain requiring storage would make this cropping option an interesting challenge to overcome. In saying all of the above things, I do believe that this is very achievable, and an innovative grower likes nothing better than to have a "Red Rag" waived in front of him or her.



Maize Harvest 2015

New Research is Showing That Defoliation May Have Advantageous Effects on Maize Yields in a Range of Environments

By Dr Chunji Liu, CSIRO Agriculture & Food, 306 Carmody Road, St Lucia, QLD 4067. Email: Chunji.liu@csiro.au, phone 07-32142223

Several decades ago, defoliation was used to investigate yield loss from hailstone and insect damage in maize. Results from some of these early studies found that defoliation could lead to significant increase in kernel yield in water-limiting environments. However, this practice often showed no effect or even had negative effects in high-yielding environments, where soil-water deficits are infrequent. It has been believed that these contrasting results make the practice difficult to use directly in production. As drought has become the single most important factor limiting crop production in many parts of the world including Australia, we have been re-assessing the effects of this practice in various crop species. Our results in maize indicate that the practice could have huge potential in both water-limiting and high-yielding environments. We are currently working on when and how this technique can be effectively used.

For water-limiting environments: As others have also reported, we have found that defoliated maize plants are more drought tolerant in water-limiting environments (Figure 1).



Figure 1. Defoliated plants are more drought tolerant (reduced leaf rolling)

The difference in drought tolerance between defoliated and non-defoliated plants can be seen in plants grown next to each other (Figure 2). This shows that the defoliated plants are capable of extracting more water and nutrients from their environment. We have also routinely observed that defoliation can dramatically delay leaf senescence (or stay-green) (Figure 3) thus likely to increase photosynthesis. We are testing a wider range of hybrids but the available data suggest that water-limited crops have a high likelihood of benefiting from this practice.



Figure 2. The difference in drought tolerance (leaf rolling) between defoliated (in the middle as marked) and non-defoliated plants (on both sides of the defoliated ones) growing next to each other.



Figure 3. Defoliation can dramatically delay leaf senescence.

For high-yielding environments: In contrast to non-defoliated controls, we have found that few of the defoliated maize plants produce tillers (Figure 4). Considering that tillers do not often produce any meaningful cobs, the reduction in tillering plants following defoliation opens up the possibility to increase yield by increasing plant density. Further, defoliated plants tend to be

more tolerant to lodging due likely to the reduced heights of both plants and cobs. The improved tolerance to lodging is another factor that should facilitate the exploitation of higher densities.



Figure 4. Defoliation reduces tillering and increases cob size.

Although our results indicate that defoliation can have huge potential in increasing maize yield in both water-limiting and high-yielding environments, we are at an early stage in testing the responses of different varieties in different environments. Further experiments are needed before we can provide growers with any confident recommendations.

We are very keen to talk to those growers who are interested in testing the practice by slashing a few hundred plants on their properties. If you would like to see for yourself if this practice can help to get better yield under water-limiting conditions for your varieties or you are interested in a new world record yield, then please contact us. Your involvement will help us to find out sooner the true potential of this practice in different varieties for different conditions.

GRDC Supports Summer Crop Pathology Activities in the Centre for Crop Health at USQ By Dr. Dante L. Adorada, Research Fellow/Diagnostic Coordinator (dante.adorada@usq.edu.au), A/Prof. Adam Sparks, Associate Professor (adam.sparks@usq.edu.au), Dr Anthony Young, Research Fellow (anthony.young2@usq.edu.au), Prof. Gavin Ash, Director, (gavin.ash@usq.edu.au)
Centre for Crop Health, USQ, Toowoomba

The USQ summer crop pathology group is conducting research as a part of a project, "Improving grower surveillance, management, epidemiology, knowledge and tools to manage crop diseases," (GRDC project code DAQ00186) in the Centre for Crop Health (CCH) at the University of Southern Queensland with support from the Grains Research and Development Corporation (GRDC).

The project is aimed at reducing the costs and losses to growers due to diseases of summer and winter field crops in the GRDC Northern Cropping Region. The Northern Region is unique in Australia because summer crops play an important role in the varied farming systems from central New South Wales to Central Queensland. Understanding these systems is critical to help farmers reduce their losses to diseases and maintain farm diversity.

The Centre's summer crop pathology team focuses mainly on integrated disease management (IDM), crop improvement for disease resistance and epidemiology in cereals and summer crops such as maize, rice, sorghum, mungbeans, sugarcane,

sunflower, soybean, peanut and other tropical crops. Their activities include:

- Conducting annual structured surveys to determine incidence, severity and distribution of endemic and emerging diseases including viruses and extend the findings to growers and agronomists.
- Providing in season diagnostic support (including virology) and rapid response to significant outbreaks of new and emerging diseases.
- Providing pathology support on disease management of field crops conducted by grower solution groups, including the Northern Grower Alliance (NGA) and GRDC-funded agronomy groups. Support may be in the provision of advice in trial planning and data collection and in the identification of pathogens or in assistance with disease rating protocols.
- Conducting studies on integrated disease management for summer and winter field crops.

- Investigating the survival of plant pathogens on crop residues and on alternate crop and weed hosts.
- Effectively communicating IDM information and packages to advisors and growers through training at workshops and courses, GRDC updates, field days, grower meetings, extension articles and electronic publications.
- Providing free diagnostic support to the growers and agronomists of the Northern Cropping region through the CCH staff and a network of specialists.

For more information, please contact one of the above authors or visit the website: <https://www.usq.edu.au/research/research-at-usq/institutes-centres/cch>

Diagnostic sample collection and submission instructions and form (PDF): <https://www.usq.edu.au/-/media/USQ/Research/CSBi-new/USQ-CCH-DiagnosticsFinal200417.ashx?la=en>



USQ and PCA staff discuss a new and emerging crop disease. (Photo: Adam Sparks)

On-Farm Storage of Maize By Peter Andrew Forster, Aghub, Email: peter@aghub.com.au

Dan Lavis and his father Brian are grain growers from Howlong/Corowa NSW. Together they crop 9,000 acres of corn and cereals.

The on-farm storage goal for the Laviss was to be able to dry down, condition and store their corn and cereals. To do this they decided to invest in 2,000 tonnes of storage. Their Superior silos are controlled by Aghub's Bin Manager which allows them to dry corn and keep it in their silos while avoiding the common storage issues of mould, insects or condensation.

Dan Lavis explains; 'We now have the capability of drying in the silo with nothing more than ambient air. This is a gamechanger for our farm! The system is so simple, we harvested our corn at 23% moisture and once it was in the bin it was all handled automatically. The system provides daily updates, detailing the progress and condition directly to our mobile phone or computer.'

The use of ambient air in the drying process has proved to be an important innovation for the Laviss. Dan states, 'The drying process is so gentle we don't have to worry about cracking or damaging the product. Ambient air drying eliminates the double handling of the grain as well as removing the need for an expensive dryer system. We put the corn directly into the silo, then the system goes to work; bringing the grain down to within end user specification and storing it until we are able to sell at the right time and price'.

For Brian Lavis, it's all about taking out the guess work when monitoring and managing grain. 'For us the guess work within corn drying has been removed. We don't have to physically check bins, or manage multiple steps to condition the crop. In the future, we plan to use the system to rehydrate overly dried grain allowing us to sell it at the correct moisture. The system is a time and revenue saver. You have access to expert advice at any time if you need to call support.'

For further information regarding storing and drying corn with superior silos and bin manager; Contact: Peter on 0477474726, or email Peter@aghub.com.au. Their website www.aghub.com.au has more information.

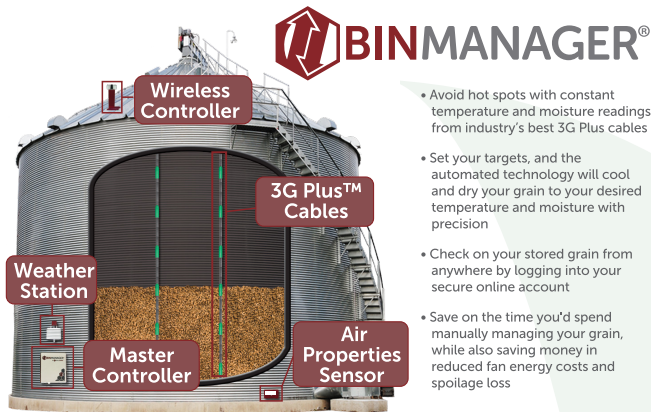


Maize Storage.



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Maize Exports from Kununurra, Western Australia

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Robinson Grain in conjunction with the Ord Co-op in Kununurra Western Australia are a month away from loading their second vessel of Pioneer P1756 maize to Korea. Harvest in the region started in late September with the early signs looking very positive in terms of yield and grain quality. The bulk of the crop will be harvested during the latter half of October moving straight from the farm to Wyndham port in readiness for the export market.

Current yields are higher than the historical average, running around 12 tonnes/ha; achieving much higher yield is made difficult by the limited amount of daylight hours during the Australian winter. The Ord Co-op has been working closely with Pioneer Seeds this season to maximise both yield and grain size by focusing on agronomic issues including nitrogen rates, plant population and irrigation management to get the best outcome for all.

This season the corn planting was a little later than usual due to the larger and longer wet season over the 2016/17 summer, but total area planted this year was around 1250 ha with all of the Ord maize irrigated via flood-furrow, using on average around 18-20 megalitres per hectare.

Maize growing in the Ord



Major Changes to Crop Program at Pilton

John and Michael Ryan are making big changes at their Pilton family farm.



Darling Downs crop and cattle producers the Ryan family are making the biggest changes to their farm since adopting zero till in the early 2000s.

Michael, his wife Elissa and parents John and Mary, recently implemented controlled traffic farming (CTF) at their Pilton Valley farm, complementing their uptake of variable rate (VR) seeding and imidazolinone-tolerant (IT) corn.

Fourth-generation farmer Michael Ryan said they were embracing select new technologies to improve soil productivity and respond to a changing climate. "Zero till greatly improved the moisture-retaining properties of our paddocks, but we saw potential for more productivity increases and long-term savings."

Mr Ryan said CTF was seen as a necessary move to fix soil compaction, and have gradually implemented it since the last summer crop season. "In the current winter crop season we have moved to full CTF on 3m wheel tracks to minimise soil compaction, because it can really reduce yields."

Additionally, he said using VR seeding was a more accurate way to seed across their dryland and irrigated paddocks, saving them money. "A variable rate planter is good for using in our paddock irrigated by the centre pivot, because you can drop your planting rate right back to a dryland rate in any area. "If you planted all areas at the same rate, the plant runs out of moisture due to the high population.

"We are saving a bag of seed over a 100 acre paddock because the planter puts on the exact population to what is desired. The planter also

uses GPS or swath control so no seed is wasted with overlap in point rows or headlands that are already planted."

The family started dairy farming in the area in the 1940s but today are producers of grain sorghum, corn, soybeans and mungbeans in summer and wheat, barley and chickpeas in winter. They also buy weaners and store cattle to grow out and fatten on their licensed feedlot.

They have two Pilton properties, Alfred Park and Glenburnie, and share farm country with outside parties. Michael and Elissa also run their own place, Glentonvale.

One of their major upgrades to the cropping side of the business was the introduction of IT corn in the 2015-16 season. Mr Ryan said one of their hybrids of choice, feed/grit corn PAC 727IT, was selected for weed control, grain quality and toughness.

"We grow it for the Lightning herbicide aspect, because we can target in-crop weeds, but also because it produces good grain for the snack foods market.

"It also has one of the best disease and stress tolerance packages, which came in handy last season."

Mr Ryan said their corn endured one of the hottest summers ever experienced in 2016-17. "We could not have had a tougher summer. It was horrendous, as many farmers would know. "On February 11 and 12 we had over 43°C which cooked the crops and made them basically ripen overnight. February was just relentless with heat

with very little rain which was definitely not an ideal scenario for corn tasselling."

Their 20ha of dryland PAC 727IT averaged 5t/ha and their 24ha under irrigation averaged 9t/ha. "The best part of the paddock under irrigation was yielding 12t/ha, so this was an excellent result for the harsh season."

"The corn definitely handled the heat well and to get 5t/ha dryland, we were really happy with it. "The fact it was zero till and had good winter rain and subsoil moisture, meant it held on through the heatwave."

The 44ha of grit corn was all forward-sold through a local grain trader.

Both paddocks were sown on October 7 with a Norseman 8-row planter on 91cm rows and harvested on April 17, and both received 1.8L/ha of Dual Gold post-plant and 125g/ha of Lightning in-crop, as well as 1.5kg/ha of atrazine.

The dryland block was fallowed out of grain sorghum for 7 months, it received 160kg/ha of N pre-plant with 50kg/ha of 812S starter fertiliser at planting, and the seeding rate was 35,000 seeds/ha.

The irrigated block was fallowed out of barley with 130kg of N/ha pre-plant, with a further 150kg/ha of N applied September. There was 60kg/ha of 812S fertiliser applied at-plant and the planting rate was 55,000 seeds/ha.

For the upcoming summer crop season, the Ryan's will plant PAC 727IT again, and add tough sorghum variety MR-Bazley to complement their mainstay MR-Taurus.

Corn Goes From Opportunity Crop to Regular Crop at Echuca By Brandon Long, Media Relations Officer, ADVANTA SEEDS brandon.long@advantaseeds.com



Kober agronomists Chris Dellavedova and Sam Toulmin advise growers on several crops, including corn.

For some growers in northern Victoria, corn is an opportunity crop, but for the Evans family, it is finding a regular spot in their program. The upcoming summer will mark the fourth time in a row the Echuca farmers have grown corn for silage. Michael Evans, his wife Jeanette and son Nick run a dryland and irrigated cropping and livestock operation, planting wheat, faba beans and canola in winter, and corn in summer.

Their agronomist, Sam Toulmin from Kober, said the Evans' initially put corn in the mix to diversify their income and to make use of their full water allocations, but have decided to keep planting 40-60ha even in low allocation seasons due to the high yields, market accessibility and weed control. "In our area we have fluctuating prices for irrigation water, so when we have access to large amounts of water at a cheap price, many growers will consider a summer crop like corn," Mr Toulmin said. "A couple of clients are going with summer crops year-in year-out, but most fluctuate." He said in the Echuca area, 85pc of crops sown are wheat, barley and canola.

Mr Toulmin said the Evans' best yield so far was in the 2015-16 season when they harvested 28 tonnes of dry matter per hectare from a crop of PAC 624. "We came off an extremely dry

winter period, so they were able to get sowable conditions early and establish the plant numbers required for optimum yield," Mr Toulmin said.

"We generally sow at 100,000 kernels per hectare for silage, and in that season they had an established plant population of 92,000." They usually budget on flood irrigation of 7ML per season, which worked out to be 4t DM/ML.

Last season was not as successful, as the wet winter inhibited seed to soil contact and paddock trafficability. "The 2016-17 summer came off an extremely wet winter period, so they didn't get the desired soil to seed contact. Established numbers were patchy, ranging from 65,000-90,000 per hectare."

The crop was sown on October 30 with a John Deere MaxEmerge planter on 91cm spacing, received 143mm of in-crop rain and was harvested March 14. Fertiliser consisted of 5t/ha of chicken litter broadcasted, 250kg of MAP plus 250kg urea deep banded prior to seeding, and 300kg of urea applied by aircraft in-crop. Chemical applications included 3.2L/ha of Primextra Gold plus 900mL Chlorpyrifos PSPE.

Along with the potential high yields, the local dairy industry provides a steady market for silage

growers, reducing the need for dry down and freight. The advantage of growing silage over grain is the quicker harvest time.

"The issue with growing summer crops here is getting them off in time for winter sowing, but corn can be harvested for silage in March, allowing the next crop to go in on time, whereas grain needs drying down in most cases."

"Most of our clients want to get it into the ground in the first two weeks of October, and something like PAC 624 suits that window well due to its CRM (comparative relative maturity) of 118. "It's a high yielding variety which enables them to get it off in March and get the next crop in without too much hassle. "As you push later into November and early December, CRM will play more of a role, as you need a quick corn."

Mr Toulmin said corn cropping in northern Victoria also offered a valuable weed management tool.

Corn Key to Closed-Loop Deniliquin Piggery By Brandon Long, Media Relations Officer, ADVANTA SEEDS brandon.long@advantaseeds.com



Giles Cunningham, Advanta Seeds, Matt Barker, Rodwells and Tristan Donaldson.



Tristan Donaldson grows corn in a closed-loop system at his Deniliquin piggery.

A closed-loop farming system whereby pig manure is used to grow corn that is fed back to pigs is paying off for a pork producer at Deniliquin.

Donaldson Farming flushes the effluent from the pig sheds into a slurry pit every day, and from there it is pumped via a pipeline and mixed with irrigation water in nearby fields. Tristan Donaldson, who manages the 445-hectare irrigated and dryland livestock and cropping business, said the system provided high crop yields, a high energy diet and reduced feed and fertiliser costs.

"Last summer we grew 64 hectares of PAC 606IT corn which produced 1000 tonnes of grain. Considering half the crop was patchy and the other half was amazing, overall we achieved 14.6t/ha at 12% moisture average, which is fantastic," Mr Donaldson said. "Some of the corn was looking you in the eye driving the header". "With an IT corn, we also have the option to spray herbicide in-crop to tackle our biggest weed, caltrop."

Mr Donaldson planted from late-October into early November and harvested from late-April to early May; though a small amount of crop did not come off until June 5. His previous season, 2015-16, was even better, with his corn averaging 15.5t/ha.

All of this has been achieved while dealing with the property's hard pan - a compacted layer of soil just below the soil surface which inhibits water and nutrient movement. This was made more difficult last year when unlike previous years, the wet winter made it impossible to deep rip the soil before planting the corn. "Because of our clay soils, we can get stunted growth in crops as the roots struggle to get down deep. Our agronomist Matt Barker from Rodwells is looking at ways to tackle the issue. "Last season he did a leaf tissue test and sent it away for analysis to see what the plant was lacking. He then made up a special brew to address this. "Strangely enough, our first block of corn sown was the last to be harvested due to hard pan. It took so long to grow in those tough spots."

Corn provides the pigs with high digestible energy grain in the feed, where other proteins and vitamins are also supplemented to provide a balance ration for their growth.

"Corn grown for grain provides the energy, but we also grow our own wheat, barley, peas, baled vetch and canola meal which provides the protein and fibre."

Mr Donaldson said the home-grown feed program helps keep the business profitable, because freighting in feed can cost \$25/t. "Paying for feed doesn't make it worthwhile. We have bore water and Murray channel irrigation water, so it makes sense to grow our own crops. We usually budget on 10ML/ha each season.

"By using the pig manure we're also cutting down the amount of synthetic fertilisers needed. "I find growing a nitrogen crop like vetch in front of corn really gives it a boost too."



Perennially Record Production and What the Future Holds

Where we have come from: Over the last decade we have seen quite the run for agriculture. From heavy appreciation of input costs as grain prices rose, to large currency spreads effecting the power of almost every country's export ability. Global grain prices have hit huge new highs, followed by a 5-year grind back to more historical margins.

We proved over and over that 'high prices are the cure for high prices'. Now it seems that we are waiting to see the inverse of that as low prices continue to build a bigger market for corn (and beans) across the globe. When the 2012 drought hit North America, the market was anticipating years of demand destruction. This was something we never agreed with, and thankfully were correct on. The ethanol plants, and other processors, that were shut down due to overpriced corn early on, quickly added processing power and efficiencies that upped global demand at a pace we couldn't have expected.

In 2012/13 world consumption for corn was at 873 million metric tonnes, a record despite the North American hiccup. Despite prices doubling and sitting well above previous plateaus we upped global demand by 8.5% in 1 year! The next couple of years the trend continued. We have now added 21.3% to global corn consumption in 5 years. Much of this increase is from the price falling from over \$300 USD per tonne in 2012 to \$110 this year at harvest in North America.

Where we are, and where are we going:

These events have created quite a few shifts in the world market over the past decade. We now are seeing the Corn Belt debating contracting in the northern United States/Canada. A smaller Safrinha corn crop in Brazil is expected this year as well with the late start to their primary soybean crop. The Safrinha corn crop is the 2nd crop to come out of Brazil. This year, a late start to first crop soybeans, along with lower prices should reduce acres substantially. Drastically reduced returns have caused producers to lose a lot of working capital despite good yields during the past few years, with very poor cash basis levels at harvest time. Producers in our region of North Dakota/Minnesota are losing as much as \$150 per acre this year due to poor harvest prices combined with regional yield shortfalls.

We now have a situation where 10% of global corn acres are likely looking around for a more profitable

cropping option for 2018. Globally the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) is already forecasting a reduction in global corn ending stocks into 2017/18 of 26 million metric tonnes. That is an 11% reduction versus current world ending stocks. That number leaves us with roughly 150% of what world ending stocks were during the 2007/08 and 2012/13 supply shortages. While that may seem like a large number, when you consider the increased global demand it doesn't take much of a problem in world corn production to see drastic shifts to global stocks. Between 2011 and 2012 in US corn production the drought reduced production by 40 million tonnes. If the US has even a 10% yield hiccup next year (2012 was a 28% reduction in trendline yields) we could see global ending stocks drop as low as the ratio we had in 2012/13. That would be also assuming the rest of the world produces at/above trendline yields!

Where is your opportunity and how to protect it:

There is a shifting wind in the storage/carry markets of North and South America. First, it was Canada and the US building massive storage capacity on farm. Just recently we have seen our South American clients take advantage of the global carries to help find profitability in a flat market.

Over the past decade most of our customers have gone from the ability to store around 25% of their crop to near 100% for many in the present day. Markets are demanding that choice be made to add to your bottom line. Current harvest delivery prices for corn in the Midwest are \$110USD per metric tonne. If producers can store until next June delivery that price jumps to \$132USD/tonne. The market for delivery has shifted farther and farther into the year as producers have gotten more and more control over their grain. The ability to take advantage of the almost annual off-season sales opportunities that arise in Australia has been a boon to some of our customers' bottom lines.

Outside of carry being the most neglected revenue improvement on many farmers' bottom lines, we are seeing the true effects of the technological improvements in agriculture with the varied weather and yields that much of the country experienced this year. It is still too early to tell, but many improvements along the lines of precision singulation of seed when planting, variable rate, etc... have really taken some of the swings in yield out of play. Some customers around here are

yielding near 13 tonne/ha when only receiving around 2/3rds of a normal summer's rainfall. Whether this is solely due to cooler temperatures, or attributed to plants having a perfect amount of area to draw moisture from without competing against seeds 'too close' to them is too early to be determined, but signs are pointing more and more towards small changes like that making differences upwards of 1 tonne/ha.

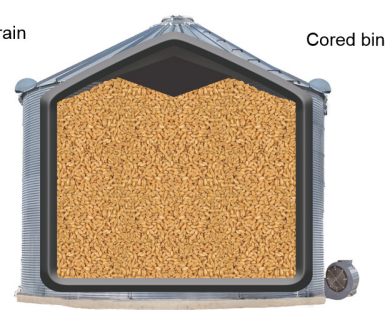
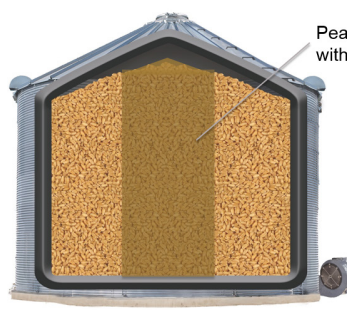
Don't neglect opportunities, and always fight greed: One line we constantly push into our clients' heads is as follows; "You want every sale you make to be your worst." If you think about that, and take it to heart, it makes objective profitable sales much easier to make. The reason there has been so much evaporation of capital on American farms is 'the fear of missing out.' Many farms struggle to start pricing when early opportunities arise, due to greed and potential future regret for not picking the top. Don't be afraid to start early, and average up. Remember, if you price 1 tonne/ha (of a 10tonne crop) at \$200/tonne and prices then rally to \$300... you still have an effective sales price of \$290 per tonne. You really do want your first sales to be 'wrong'!

Also, don't let storage cost for your delivered grain get out of hand. This year we have encouraged clients to avoid storage costs due to the very cheap ways of re-owning all three of the primary grains. The money call options for corn that expire the end of February cost \$4/ton. If futures rally, you capture that upside, if the carry disappears in futures and markets fall... you have no downside exposure. When margins are thin like they have been the last couple years, managing risk and exposure well can make an even more significant difference to your bottom line than in wider margin years. Those missing pennies add up quickly.

All in all, the opportunity is growing annually when you look at the demand picture of global grains. Unfortunately, the world has been producing record crops for 5 years straight. This makes it a tough situation currently, but long-term opportunity grows larger by the day as demand continues to expand. Marginal acres are shifting away from corn/beans now and those markets will likely produce some profitable sales opportunities over the next 6 months.

For more information please contact Luke : <mailto:luke@themoneyfarm.com>

Coring Peaked Corn in Grain Bins: What Are Best Practices? Peter Andrew Forster, Aghub, Email: peter@aghub.com.au



How many loads of grain need to be removed? Accumulation of fines in the corn bin varies from the centre (high accumulation) to side (low accumulation). It is assumed that within a 25 cm diameter across the centre of the bin is where about 90% of the fines accumulate, without the use of a spreader. The table below gives you a sense of how many loads should be removed from certain corn bin sizes to properly core the corn.

Table: Based on Corn with a 23° filling angle, coring centre peak at 1/2 the bin diameter

There will be different numbers of loads for coring if the corn mass configurations (where the grain levels and peaks in the corn bin) are different. The amounts will also vary upon the grain type and the moisture content of the grain.

At IntelliFarms, we generally promote a "one time coring" process. In a perfect world, coring the corn periodically as the bin is filled is the best scenario. However, this requires a lot of additional time and effort, which we know is often unrealistic.

At minimum, a single coring will result in fines being removed from the peak, allowing for more uniform airflow. Not coring can cause airflow to channel to the outside of the bin, creating a lack of airflow through a portion of the bin that can in fact be much larger than just the centre peak.

These are general guidelines for coring and minimizing the risks that come with peaked grain. Every bin scenario is different, so we do encourage you to contact an IntelliFarms representative if you have challenges or questions about best practices for managing your bin. With proper management, you can protect the quantity and quality of your stored grain, and boost your bottom line. You can also contact Ian at Aghub regarding your Corn storage and Conditioning requirements at ian@aghub.com.au www.aghub.com.au or call 0418 695 933

Bin Diameter (metres)	Tonnes to be removed for coring	Number of loads to be removed (1 load = 25.4 T)
7.2	4.136	0.17
10.8	13.9	0.57
12.6	22.17	0.91
14.4	33.1	1.35
18.0	64.6	2.64



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2017/18 National Maize Yield Competition

Given the success of the 2016/17 National Maize Yield Competition all growers with high yielding crops are encouraged to enter the National Maize Yield Competition.

In conjunction with independent volunteer scrutineers, Pioneer seed, Pacific seeds and HSR have kindly agreed to continue to help facilitate the weigh binning of the best entrants. The MAA has produced a strict set of criteria that must be adhered to when entering the competition. The criteria will be freely available on our web site <http://www.maizeaustralia.com.au/> or through one of the afore mentioned commercial Maize seed companies

This will be an exciting event for growers over the coming season, with both dryland and irrigated maize growers encouraged to enter their best performing crop.

JUDGING: Judging is on YIELD ONLY, Corrected for moisture content as percentage

Categories:

1. Irrigated

IRRIGATED COMPETITION STANDARDS

CROPS	YIELD KILOGRAMS PER HECTARE		%MOISTURE CONTENT
	Standard	Existing Record	
Maize	15000	21000	14.0%

NB. Existing Record is the current highest yield, each year has different conditions, hence you may not need to achieve this yield to win in any given year. The standard yield is the minimum yield estimate required to enter the competition.

2. Dryland

DRYLAND COMPETITION STANDARDS

CROPS	YIELD KILOGRAMS PER HECTARE		%MOISTURE CONTENT
	Standard	Existing Record	
Maize	6285	TBC	14.0%

Entry fee – One entry is free if a current MAA member, non-members \$125 (includes MAA membership) Entry Forms can be obtained from: <http://www.maizeaustralia.com.au/downloads/Aust%20Maize%20crop%20competition.pdf>

A Perpetual Shield will be presented to the winner in each category at an award dinner to align with MAA AGM.

COMPETITION CONDITIONS

Existing Record Yield is the maximum yield achieved to date in Australia.

Standard Yield is the minimum yield required for a crop to qualify for prize money

1. Only commercial approved strains of crops may be entered in the competition.
2. Competitors may enter any number of plots, of each of any named hybrid of Irrigated Agricultural Crop, which has been pre and/ or post watered (irrigated only) or not pre and/or post watered (dryland only), of not less than (10) hectares in one piece. Plots of the same hybrid must have different recent crop history.

3. Judging will be carried out by a scrutineer approved by the Maize Association of Australia. Scrutineers must be independent and may be local agronomists or chemical resellers. The Judges decision shall be final.

Entrants must notify the scrutineer 48 hours before harvest.

4. Each entry must have uniform treatment throughout and similar recent crop history. A yield test representative of the whole area, comprising 0.1 hectare or more, will be taken at the Judge's discretion.
5. The area harvested must be measured by wheel or hand held GPS and the number of rows and row spacing recorded by the Scrutineer.

6. Scrutineering forms with complete crop information and yield results should be forwarded directly to the MAA.
7. Entries will not be accepted for the Dryland Category if the block can be irrigated.
8. Entries are made subject to the Rules, By-Laws and Regulations of the Maize Association of Australia.
9. MAA reserves the right of refusing or cancelling any entry without giving the reason for so doing.
10. Results will be announced in the "COB"

MAA Activities Over The Past 12 Months

At the recent MAA AGM the decision was made to make membership to the MAA free for all growers. Please contact Liz Mann (lizmann.ag@gmail.com) to ensure you are included on the mailing list for all future MAA correspondence.

A number of you may be asking "What has the MAA done for us over the past year?" This is a valid question; hopefully the following will help explain the MAA activities.

The following permits have been obtained and are held by the MAA:

- PER81352: Propiconazole/Maize & Popcorn/ Northern Corn Leaf Blight (Effective 10 Aug 2015 to 31 Aug 2018). This has been extended.
- PER81373: Abamectin/Maize & Popcorn/ Two-Spotted Mite (Effective 18 Aug 2015 to 30 Nov 2018). This has been extended.
- PER82075 Paramite Maize & Popcorn/Two-Spotted Mite (Effective 7 Dec 2015 to 1 April 2019).

MAA this past year launched the Inaugural Australian Maize Yield Competition with the aim to raise the profile of maize growing in Australia.

MAA is responsible for compiling and publishing the COB. Financial support is no longer available from the GRDC to produce this publication.

Prior to 1999 the MAA was involved in negotiations with the Grains Council to reduce the research levy to 0.7% of farm gate value when all other grains attract a levy of 1.0%. It was argued by the MAA at the time that maize growers already pay

for genetic improvement when they purchase their hybrid seed, therefore it was agreed during negotiations at the time that maize would be levied at the lower rate.

What does this mean for a maize grower this year? If we assume a maize price of \$285.00 /tonne farm gate average through the eastern states this season and multiply it by 0.3% this equates to \$0.855 cents/tonne or a total of \$427,500 spread over the expected 2015 harvest. A grower with an expected 1,000 tonne harvest will receive an additional \$855 in their bank account, not a bad annual return for their \$100 membership!

The MAA has also been involved in increasing market access through market research, with numerous trade visits to north Asia and having the vision to keep the Australian maize industry GM free. This has resulted in exports growing from 1% to around 20% of total national production. Australian Non –GM corn attracts a premium over GM corn from the USA and Brazil. All Australian grocery manufacturers and exporters using maize as an ingredient, insist on Non-GM maize.

The Maize Association of Australia represents growers, researchers and industry. If it were not for the guidance and vision of the MAA the Australian industry would most definitely have contracted back to a domestic only, grain opportunity.

If you want to see a viable, growing maize industry with increased export market opportunities, get behind your MAA executive and join today. The executive are all volunteers giving freely of their time to help grow the Australian maize industry.



The Maize Association of Australia will be undertaking a number of activities in Northern Victoria and Southern NSW over the coming season. These will include: Field days

All members of the MAA will be invited to participate in the field days. If you would like to receive the field days notices and details of the on-farm research please forward your email address to Liz Mann (lizmann.ag@gmail.com) or phone 0427 857 578

MAA Membership renewals will be sent out to existing members in the coming month. If you are not currently a member, but would like to join, the cost of membership (inc. GST) is:

Corporate member	\$1,500/year
Merchant company member	\$750/year
Research corporation member	\$220/year
Individual producer member	No Cost

Please contact Liz Mann for additional information.

MAA Executive

The executive of the Maize Association of Australia is elected by the Association's members to represent the maize industry and work on its behalf:

- To identify new opportunities for growers and marketers;
- To respond to issues affecting the industry, e.g. GMO and export standards; and to
- Liaise with R&D corporations to achieve the best outcomes from growers' R&D levies.

The table below lists the members of the current executive, along with their contact details. If you know of an issue about which the maize industry should be aware, or an issue on which the maize industry should develop a position, or could assist with the advancement of, please contact an executive member to discuss your thoughts.

MAA Executive Committee 2017-2018

Liz Mann	CEO - MAA	0427 857 578	lizmann.ag@gmail.com
Bernie Walsh	Walsh Farms Pty Ltd	0427 478 227	walshfarms@bigpond.com.au
David Coddington	HSR Pty. Ltd.	0499 274 464	david.c@HSRseeds.com
Tony Cogswell	Lachlan Commodities	02 6851 2077	tony@lachlancommodities.com
Gino De Stefani	Yarranbrook Farms Pty. Ltd.	0427 763 845	ginodestefani@hotmail.com
Anthony Furse	Robinson Grain Trading		anthony@robinsongrain.com.au
Rob Johnston	Grower / Heritage Seeds	0427 427 577	rjohnston@heritageseeds.com.au
Trevor Philp	Advanta Seeds		trevor.philp@advantaseeds.com
Andrew Pollard	Grower / Netafim	0427 853 197	apollard@netafim.com.au
Johannes Roellgen	Tyunga Farms P/L		johannes.roellgen@bigpond.com
Jason Scott	Pioneer Seeds	0447 717 020	jason.scott@gentechseeds.com
Stephen Wilson	Pioneer Hi-Breed Aust.	0428 351 196	stephen.wilson@pioneer.com

Maize Association of Australia Incorporated ABN 1650 790 2551

Membership Application 2015/16 for membership based on the financial year ending June 30, 2016. Please accept my/our application for membership of the Maize Association of Australia (tick relevant box)

- | | |
|---|---------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Corporate members | \$1,500.00 per year |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Merchant company members | \$750 per year |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Research corporation members | \$220.00 per year |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Individual/producer members | No cost |

Please make your cheque payable to Maize Association of Australia Membership fees inclusive of GST

Name.....
 Company/Organisation.....
 Address.....
 Town/City.....State.....Postcode.....
 Telephone.....Fax.....
 Email.....

Please cut out this form and return it with your cheque to:

**Maize Association of Australia,
 PO Box 2293,
 Shepparton Vic, 3632**

The MAA will issue you with a tax invoice on receipt of your membership application and payment.

Direct Credit

Please enter your name and invoice number when paying by direct credit

Account name: Maize Association of Australia
 BSB: 032 750
 Bank: Westpac
 Account: 25 7709
 Branch: Banna Ave, Griffith

**If you would like to receive the COB
 and be on the MAA mailing list,
 please send an email to lizmann.ag@gmail.com**

*Thank you for supporting the MAA -
 YOUR industry association
www.maizeaustralia.com.au*