

Maize - crucial steps to target a high yielding crop

Growing maize has increased in popularity in South Gippsland as it can be a great source of high quality feed for dairy cows. Understanding the right steps to take will help you to achieve the best potential dryland yields.

What temperature should the soil be for sowing?

Ideally planting should occur in soils that are 12 degrees celcius and rising when measured at 9:00am. Temperatures below 10 degrees celcius will cause the seed to struggle in initiating root and shoot growth. Once maize seeds are sown they will naturally take in water, the longer the seeds remain ungerminated in the ground the higher the risk of seed rot, resulting in poor germination.

Why is banding starter fertiliser important?

Quite simply, maize requires large amounts of nutrients to produce high yields. Phosphorus is a key nutrient in this process, with a direct correlation between P availability and root growth and crop yields. Phosphorus is relatively immobile in the soil and can easily become plant unavailable. For this reason it is important to place the phosphorus close to the plant root zone, allowing the plant to more readily access the P and therefore enhancing it's early vigour.

How much fertiliser should be applied?

Fertiliser input for maize should match the potential yield of the crop. Before deciding on maize, a realistic yield estimate should be set with the amount of fertiliser determined based on the crop requirements. Below is the recommended amount of nutrient required per ton of dry matter produced.

Nutrient Required	Kg/T DM
Nitrogen	12.8
Phosphorus	2.6
Potassium	12
Sulphur	1.4
Calcium	2
Magnesium	1.7
Zinc	0.17

*Source: GRDC GrowNotes April 2017



Is maize right for you?

With estimated costs of over \$2000 per hectare it is important to consider the fit maize will have in your farming system as a summer crop. With yield potentials of 18 tonne of dry matter or more it is an attractive option. It is important to work with both your agronomist and nutritionist to determine the benefits of maize silage for your herd before making the decision.

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This information is general in nature, please talk to your qualified agronomist for information that is specific to your needs.