



Animal &
Plant Health
Agency

Great Britain and Northern Ireland Variety List Trials: Trial Procedures for Official Examination of Value for Cultivation and Use (VCU) Harvest 2026

Forage and grain maize

Appendices

February 2026

Changes since last version (May 2025)

- Appendix 5 new controls
- Appendix 9 Addition for Growth stages for Forage and Grain Maize

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Appendix 1 – Approved Trial Organisers and Operators

Activity	Organisers/Operators Responsible
VCU Trial Organiser	BSPB
VCU Growing Trial Operators	Niab Hunt Agri Service Ltd Limagrain UK Ltd Grainseed Ltd
Seed Handling Operator	Niab
Trial Inspection and Technical Validation Operator	Niab
Quality Testing and Standard Setting Operator	Growing Trial Operators for Dry Matter Niab for additional tests
Trial Design and Data Handling Operator	Niab
Data and Standard Setting Operator	Niab

Appendix 2 – Seed treatments for use on NL trials

Seed to be provided untreated unless treated seed is specifically requested by the trials organiser (BSPB), in which case only the specified treatment may be applied and must be clearly recorded on the seed label and accompanying documentation.

Appendix 3 – Seed dispatch deadline dates

VCU seed must be delivered to the Seed Handling Operator by

- 15th February.

Appendix 4 – VCU growing trial operators and trial locations

AX4.1 Growing Trial Operators and Seed Handling Operator

AX4.1.1 Forage Maize

Growing Trial Operators	Seed Handling Operator (If not Trial Operator)	Location of Trial
Niab		Somerset
Niab		Devon
Hunt Agri Services Ltd	Niab	Cheshire
Hunt Agri Services Ltd	Niab	Gloucestershire
Grainseed Ltd	Niab	Wiltshire
Grainseed Ltd	Niab	Nottinghamshire

AX4.1.2 Grain Maize

Growing Trial Operators	Seed Handling Operator (If not Trial Operator)	Location of Trial
Niab		Dorset
Limagrain		Nottinghamshire
Limagrain		Dorset

AX4.2 Pathology Trial Operator

Pathology Trial Operator	Location of Trial
Not applicable	Not applicable

Appendix 5 – Control varieties for VCU Assessments

The control varieties for Forage Maize are:

- Prospect
- Bonnie
- KWS Granturismo
- Conclusion
- KWS Pasco

The control varieties for Grain Maize are:

- Conclusion
- Ambition

Appendix 6 – Dates for Submission of Data

Dates by which Records should be sent to Data Handling Operator:

Record	Latest date of receipt by Trials Organiser
Site data part 1 and site sketch	One month after drilling
Site data part 2	31 July
Plot records (in approved electronic format)	Immediately

Appendix 7 – Disease Assessment Key

AX7.1 Leaf diseases

1.	Examine leaves in 3 areas of each plot
2.	Include all necrosis and chlorosis attributable to disease to be assessed
3.	Estimate % infection using the description below, interpolating values if necessary
4.	Record the average % infection from the 3 areas

AX7.2 Infection disease severity description

Infection	Description of severity
0	No infection observed
0.1	Older leaves with a trace of infection, other leaves uninfected
1	Older leaves with up to 10% infection, other leaves largely uninfected
5	Older leaves with up to 25% infection, middle-aged leaves with a trace of infection
10	Older and middle-aged leaves with up to 25% infection, young leaves largely uninfected
25	Leaves of all ages appear 50% infected 50% green on average
50	Leaves of all ages appear more infected than green on average
75	Very little green tissues left
100	No green tissue left

Appendix 8 – Herbicide Usage for Forage Maize Variety List Trials

Use approved herbicides/pesticides according to current legislation

The following sole active ingredients must not be used in trials:

- Rimsulfuron (example product Titus)

The following active ingredient may only be used in trials after consultation and with the permission of the Trials Organiser:

- Nicosulfuron (example product Samson Extra)
- Mesotrione (example product Callisto)

If the Trials Operator has concerns over the use of any herbicide products not mentioned above, they should consult with the Trials Organiser.

In all cases trials should be closely monitored and if any crop damage is seen on any variety this must be recorded and reported to the Trials Organiser.

Appendix 9 – Growth stages of Forage and Grain Maize

Maize Weber and Bleiholder, 1990; Lancashire et al., 1991

Phenological growth stages and BBCH-identification keys of maize (*Zea mays* L.)

Code Description:

Principal growth stage 0: Germination

- 00 Dry seed (caryopsis)
- 01 Beginning of seed imbibition
- 03 Seed imbibition complete
- 05 Radicle emerged from caryopsis
- 06 Radicle elongated, root hairs and /or side roots visible
- 07 Coleoptile emerged from caryopsis
- 09 Emergence: coleoptile penetrates soil surface (cracking stage)

Principal growth stage 1: Leaf development^{1, 2}

- 10 First leaf through coleoptile
- 11 First leaf unfolded
- 12 2 leaves unfolded
- 13 3 leaves unfolded
- Stages continuous till ...
- 19 9 or more leaves unfolded

Principal growth stage 3: Stem elongation

- 30 Beginning of stem elongation
- 31 First node detectable
- 32 2 nodes detectable
- 33 3 nodes detectable
- Stages continuous till ...
- 39 9 or more nodes detectable³

Principal growth stage 5: Inflorescence emergence, heading

- 51 Beginning of tassel emergence: tassel detectable at top of stem
- 53 Tip of tassel visible
- 55 Middle of tassel emergence: middle of tassel begins to separate
- 59 End of tassel emergence: tassel fully emerged and separated

- 1) A leaf may be described as unfolded when its ligule is visible or the tip of next leaf is visible
- 2) Tillering or stem elongation may occur earlier than stage 19; in this case continue with principal growth stage 3
- 3) In maize, tassel emergence may occur earlier, in this case continue with principal growth stage 5

Principal growth stage 6: Flowering, anthesis

61 Male: stamens in middle of tassel visible
Female: tip of ear emerging from leaf sheath

63 Male: beginning of pollen shedding
Female: tips of stigmata visible

65 Male: upper and lower parts of tassel in flower
Female: stigmata fully emerged

67 Male: flowering completed
Female: stigmata drying

69 End of flowering: stigmata completely dry

Principal growth stage 7: Development of fruit

71 Beginning of grain development: kernels at blister stage, about 16% dry matter

73 Early milk

75 Kernels in middle of cob yellowish-white (variety-dependent), content milky, about 40% dry matter

79 Nearly all kernels have reached final size

Principal growth stage 8: Ripening

83 Early dough: kernel content soft, about 45% dry matter

85 Dough stage: kernels yellowish to yellow (variety dependent), about 55% dry matter

87 Physiological maturity: black dot/layer visible at base of kernels, about 60% dry matter

89 Fully ripe: kernels hard and shiny, about 65% dry matter

Principal growth stage 9: Senescence

97 Plant dead and collapsing

99 Harvested product



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