

## **Maize under film on the rise**

**This year 600 hectares of maize under film have been sown. The benefits are clear. The season is shortened, less fertilization is necessary and the maize has higher yields. Ideal from the perspective of ‘more milk from own roughage’. However, people are not always positive.**

On first sight there seems to be no difference between the maize under film and the regularly sown maize on the trial field in Montfoort. But those who drove by this field two months ago could see that the maize under film had reached shoulder height, whereas the regularly sown maize just reached a length of 20 centimeters. “It is a good year for maize under film”, says agricultural consultant Hein-Willem Leeraar, who has a lot experience in growing maize under film in Friesland. “A long and cold spring caused a period of stagnation of the regularly sown maize. The varieties sown under film had a better start thanks to the high temperatures under film.”

The trial field consists of 8 identical late varieties sown under film and sown in the open. Jos Groot Koerkamp of Limagrain says: “Samples, measured by the LG Animal Nutrition Laboratory, demonstrate that at this moment there is difference in dry matter content of around 5%. In harvesting date this means 15 days of earlier harvest.” With this data he immediately shows the benefits: sowing under film shortens the growing season. It also means less fertilization. Calculations show that adding phosphate is not necessary anymore and that the gift of nitrogen can be reduced by one-third. Besides that, samples of nutritional value have shown that the maize grown under film contains between 900 and 100 kilograms more starch per hectare.

Regardless of all this, not everyone is convinced. The weed pressure is high under film. However, this can be solved by a second treatment with chemicals. Dirk van ‘t Riet of De Samenwerking: “In a normal year the farmer might not choose for this system. It will cost him 200 to 300 euro more per hectare and he has to earn this back.”