

FODDER RAPE

A popular forage crop with many livestock farmers due to its ease of production, the flexibility of its sowing date and its palatability at feeding time. It is capable of producing a large bulk of fodder in a short period. Not as winter hardy as Kale. Fodder Rape is an ideal pioneer crop in the reclamation of hill and marginal land.

Sowing period: May to early September in the South. May to mid August in the North. Early sowing (May-mid July) may suffer severely from powdery Mildew and aphids. Late June sowing gives good crop in October.

Seeding rates: Seeding rate depends on sowing conditions. Fine and firm seedbed required. Broadcast at 9-11 kg/ha (3.6-4.5 kg/acre). Direct drill at 6 kg/ha (2.8 kg/acre).

Varieties: EMERALD - Consistently high yielding variety over many years with good leaf to stem ratio. Bred in Ireland.

HOBSON - Produces good yields with a high leaf to stem ratio. Suitable if sowing early. STEGO - High yielding variety.

Lime: Target pH of 6.0-7.0

Fertiliser: N 90kg/ha (72 units/acre): P 30 kg/ha (24 units/acre): K 60 kg/ha (48 units/acre). E.g. 4 x 50 kg/acre 18-6-12

Weed Control: Normally none. Could use Triplen pre sowing and incorporate to 5 cm.
(Light soils 2 L/ha, Medium & Heavy soils 2.3 L/ha)

Pest Problems: Flea Beetles can attack at emergence, control by spraying Dursban 1.5 L/ha. Watch for slugs and leatherjackets Pigeons can be troublesome in the young crop - bait, shoot.

Disease: Club root - Very susceptible to attack, good crop rotation will avoid the problem.
Powdery mildew - susceptible especially in early sown crops.

Dry Matter yield:	3.5 - 5 t/ha
Fresh yield:	25 - 36 t/ha
Dry Matter:	12 - 13%
Crude Protein:	18 - 20%

Feeding Information:

Rape is extremely useful as a feed fattening lambs and lactating ewes and very good performance can be achieved with good grazing conditions. It is also widely used to supplement cattle and cows but care is needed as there is a much greater risk of digestive disorders than with sheep. These problems can be prevented by taking the following precautions: Introduce the Rape gradually. Restrict intakes Always feed hay or silage as a roughage source. Supplement with phosphorus and Iodine. Ensure all diets are properly balanced