

# Fodder Rape Crop Husbandry

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



Fodder Rape is 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 sowings (May-mid July) may suffer severely from Powdery Mildew and aphids.  
Late June sowing gives a good crop in October.

**Seeding rates:** Seeding rate depends on sowing conditions. Fine and firm seedbed required.

**Broadcast:** 9-11kg/ha (3.6-4.5 kg/acre).

**Direct Drill:** 6 kg/ha (2.8 kg/acre).

## Varieties:

**HOBSON :** Produces good yields with a very high leaf to stem ratio. Suitable if sowing early, due to good resistance to powdery mildew. Very good early vigour to outgrow weeds.

**BARCOLI :** High yielding medium height variety with good leaf to stem ratio. Very Suitable for sheep.

**Lime:** Target pH of 6.0-7.0

**Fertiliser:** N 90-125 kg/ha (72-100 units/Ac); P 20-30 kg/ha (16-24 units/Ac); K 50-60 kg/ha (40-48 units/Ac), e.g. 5 x 50kg/Ac 18-6-12.

**Weed Control:** Normally none.

**Pest problems:** Flea Beetles, Slugs and Leatherjackets are the most likely pests.  
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.

**Feeding Information:** Rape is extremely useful as a feed for 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