

# Kale Crop Husbandry

Dry Matter yield:	6 - 9 t/ha
Fresh yield:	40 - 60 t/ha
Dry Matter:	14 - 16 %
Crude Protein:	15 - 17 %



Kale is a well proven fodder crop providing high yields of green fodder and a flexible utilization period which can stretch from August right through to the following March. The crop has high crude protein content, good winter hardiness and can be fed to both cattle and sheep. It can also be harvested and ensiled.

**Sowing period:** April to mid July in the south (sow up to late July only on very good sites).  
April to late June in the north.

April sowing - utilize crop from August, June sowing - good crop in Nov / Dec.

**Seeding rates:** Seeding rate depends on sowing conditions and method of sowing. Fine and firm seedbed required similar to grass reseeding.

**Broadcast:** 5.5 - 8kg/ha (2.2 - 3.2 kg/acre)

**Direct Drill:** 4-5kg/ha (1.6 - 2kg acre)

## Varieties:

**KEEPER :** High yielding, winter hardy, high leaf to stem ratio and good nutritional value.

**MARIS KESTREL :** Good yield from a short winter hardy variety, high leaf to stem ratio.

**CALEDONIAN :** Good yield from a short winter hardy variety, high leaf to stem ratio.

**Lime:** Target pH of 6.2-7.0

**Fertiliser:** N 125 kg/ha (100 units/Ac); P 30-50 kg/ha (24-40 units/Ac); K 100 kg/ha (80 units/Ac), e.g. 6 x 50 kg/acre 18-6-12. If soil Boron levels are low spray Solubor 5 kg/ha (2kg/acre) onto young crop

**Weed Control:** Normally none. Could use Butisan S within 48 hours after sowing.

**Pest problems:** Flea Beetles can attack at emergence, control with an application of foliar contact insecticide  
Watch for Slugs and Leatherjackets.  
Pigeons can be troublesome in the young crop.

**Disease:** Club root – Very susceptible to attack, good crop rotation will avoid the problem.

**Feeding Information:** Kale can be grazed in situ by cattle or sheep with strip grazing as the preferred method. Feed utilization can vary from 60% increasing to 80% on good dry sites with daily movement of the electric fence. It can also be zero grazed or ensiled for feeding later. The intake of Kale should be restricted because of the danger of Haemolytic Anaemia (nutritional redwater). This is more severe in cows than in sheep. The incidence of this problem is much greater in crops that are flowering or producing seed. Livestock fed on Kale should be supplemented with extra Iodine and Phosphorus. Ensure all diets are properly balanced for protein, energy, minerals and roughage.