

Safety tips for feeding Brassica

The following basic feeding guidelines have been designed to help maximise the animal production from brassica.

Brassicas need careful grazing management, particularly early in the season when they are first being fed to your stock; this will help overcome potential animal health issues.



Introduce your stock slowly onto your brassica crop.

Animals coming from other feeds need time to adapt to a brassica diet. We suggest that they are introduced slowly (1-2 hours per day) for the first 7-10 days. Sudden access could upset the balance in the rumen which can result in poor animal performance. By slowly introducing them to your brassica crop you allow the rumen time to adjust to the high quality forage.

Some animals, no matter how much they are offered, do not do well on brassica. These animals should be quickly identified and removed back onto pasture.

Break feeding is the best method of feeding brassica, as it allows more control over your stocks intake and utilisation. You also can better manage the crops re growth potential (in multi graze crops). Small and frequent breaks with long break “faces” will also result in less wastage and help achieve better crop utilisation.

Feed extra fibre with brassica.

Brassica portion of the diet should not exceed 70-80% of total intake, and as brassica crops don't contain much 'effective fibre', a source of fibre (e.g. hay, straw, silage) should be offered to help maintain rumen function while grazing them. Feeding extra fibre encourages more chewing and increased saliva, which in turn helps maintain rumen pH leading to less digestive upsets.

Extra fibre also will prevent overfeeding, it is suggested that 20-30% of the diet is fed as hay, straw, or runoff pasture when brassica make up the majority of daily intake.

Give your stock access to water when grazing a brassica crop at all times.

It is recommended that you give your stock access to plenty of fresh water at all times. Limiting water access will cause a decline in your stocks dry matter intake.

Consult with your local Vet and be aware of the potential stock health issues that can be associated grazing with brassica crops.

There are a wide range of potential stock health issues when grazing brassica; you may also need to provide extra trace elements while grazing them.

Good management will help lower the chance of potential stock health risks; however we suggest a consultation with your local Vet before you start to graze your brassica so you are aware of some of the issues as well as being able to identify early signs of problems.



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