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# Considering Brassica Crops ?

There are a range of brassica species available to fill the forage gaps throughout the year, for both sheep and cattle. But there are some considerations to bear in mind when choosing which species to use, especially as some have a much longer establishment time than others and should be planted by late spring.

**Kale, hardy turnip & Swede:** These are the most winter hardy brassica species, providing reliable forage after Christmas. But they must have a growing window of at least 20 weeks, so they need to be sown by the end of June.

**Stubble turnips:** This high protein fodder crop is useable 12-14 weeks after sowing and can be planted until August. Large turnip bulbs will hold livestock until just before or after Christmas.

**Forage rape:** This is a quick growing, leafy crop which is ready to graze 10 weeks after sowing, so it's ideal for filling the hungry gap from early summer into autumn. Since it's leafy, and does not need time to bulb up, the livestock will utilise it quickly after a spring sowing, making way for following it with an autumn sown cereal or grass ley.

**Hybrid rape-kale:** Combining the speedy establishment of forage rape with the winter hardiness of kale, this crop can be grazed 12 weeks from sowing, with good winter hardiness for mid-late season growing. Warm, open autumns allow it to be sown into September, managed grazing will also promote pant regrowth and a secondary grazing.

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