



RED MEAT UPDATES

T A S M A N I A

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Forage brassica options in Tasmania

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Introduction

- Forage brassicas in Tasmania: An overview
- Brassica variety options
- Crop production strategies
- Getting grazing management right
- What's new for the future

Why grow forage brassicas?

- Its cheap feed – c/kg dry matter (DM)
- It's a high-quality feed
- It has a high water use efficiency (WUE) rate
- It's a great break crop to use when renovating pasture.

Ultimately growing forage brassicas can be highly productive and profitable.

Forage brassicas in Tasmania: An overview



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Brassica options for Tasmania

| Type | Varieties | Sowing kg/ha (drilled) | Weeks to 1st grazing | Notes | Multi-graze | Earliest sowing | Latest sowing |
|--------------|-------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|---|---------------------------------------|--------------------|------------------|
| Leafy turnip | Hunter | 3–6 | 6–8 | Fastest crop available. Multi-graze is possible if managed well. | Yes | Sep | Mar |
| | Pacer | | | | | | |
| | Pasja | | | | | | |
| Rape | Winfred | 3–6 | 12–14 | Best to wait until crops reach full maturity before grazing. Will not satisfactorily re-grow unless grazed between 65–80% of cover each time. | Yes if grazing management is correct. | Mid October | Mar |
| | Greenland | | | | | | |
| | Goliath | | | | | | |
| | Titan | | | | | | |
| | Interval | | | | | | |
| | Rangi | | | | | | |
| Turnip | Barkant | 1.5–3 | 12–14 | Tankard-style stubble turnips. High yielding, quick to graze. | No | Mid October | Mar |
| | Marco | | | | | | |
| | Rival | | | Globe type | | | |
| | Dynamo | | | | | | |
| | G2 | 1.25–2.5 | 16–18 | In-ground storage possible | | | |
| | Green Globe | | | | | | |
| Swede | Invitation | 1 | 16–20 | High dry matter. Excellent winter grazing crop. | No | Nov | Jan |
| | Dominion | 1 | 16–20 | | | | |
| Kale | Sovereign | 3 | 14–16 | High-quality autumn/winter grazing option. | No | Nov | Jan |
| | Caledonian | 3 | 14–16 | | | | |
| | Regal | 3 | 14–16 | | | | |
| | Gruner | 3 | 14–16 | | | | |

Crop production strategies

Forage brassica yield-limiting factors:

- available water
- usable heat
- nutrition
- genetics
- pests and disease



Soil preparation and sowing technology

- Burn off: including insecticide
- Fallow (if possible)
- Soil preparation:
 - will vary depending on circumstances
 - disc
 - plough
 - one-pass sowing common.
- Sowing:
 - air seeder/power harrow combination
 - little to no crops broadcasted anymore
 - precision is desired.



Sowing examples



Sowing examples



Nutrient requirements

- One of the major limiting factors we have direct control over.
- Soil test, don't guess. Monitor to manage. Be fert smart.
- Approximate inputs for 10 and 15t/DM/ha yields :

| Yield (t DM/ha) | Nutrients (kg/ha) | | | | |
|--------------------|-------------------|----|-----|----|------------------|
| | N | P | K | S | + Trace elements |
| 10 | 250 | 30 | 150 | 55 | B + Mo |
| 15 | 375 | 45 | 225 | 85 | |



Crop management

Monitor emergence closely

- Cutworm, redlegged earth mite (RLEM), lucerne flea, Argentine stem weevil (adult and larvae), ducks, geese, wallaby, deer, etc.



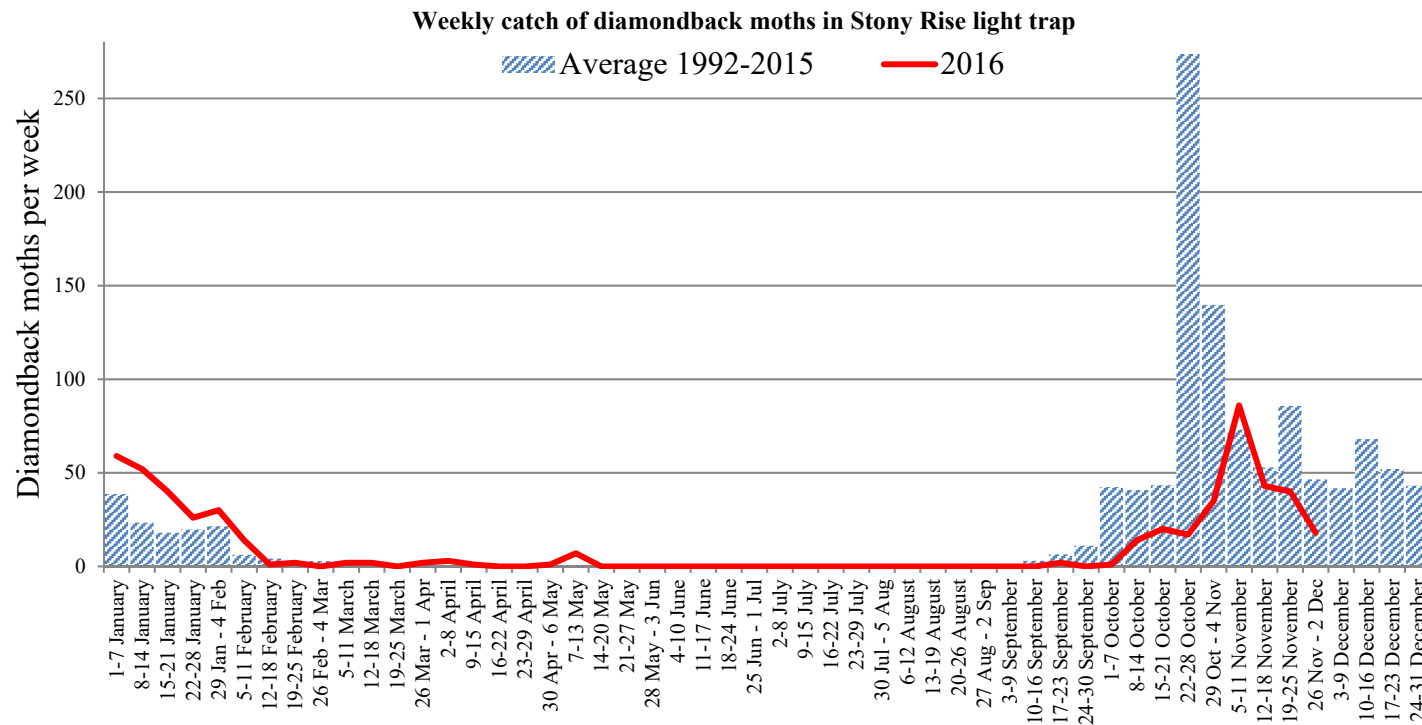
Crop management

- Weeds: we do have options available e.g. ForageMax herbicide in turnips and forage rape (not in kale or swede).



Source – Dan Dixon  - @DanDixon_Ag

Crop management



Source : Mr Lionel Hill - Principal Entomologist, Plant Biosecurity & Diagnostics Branch
Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water & Environment

Crop management

Diamondback moth, cabbage white butterfly, heliothis, native budworm.

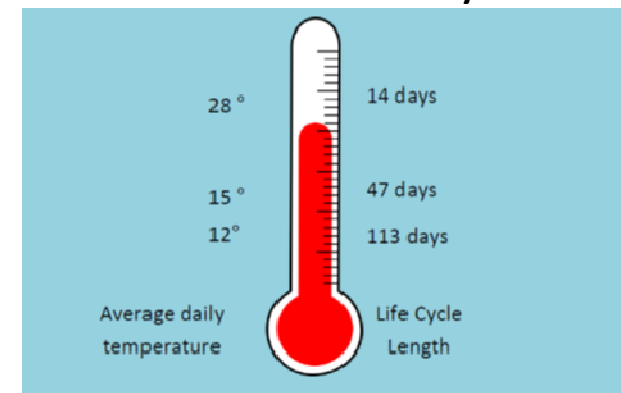
Early to mid season

Chevron cutworm, cabbage white butterfly, looper, leaf miner.

Mid to late season



Temperature effect on diamondback moth life cycle



Grazing management

- Effective grazing management maximises yield, feed quality AND utilisation
 - Ensure crop has matured prior to grazing.
 - Ensure stock are up to date with their vaccines.
 - Introduce animals over a 7–10 day period.
 - Block or strip graze with portable electric fencing.
 - ‘Back fence’ multiple-graze crops.
 - Avoid introducing stock with empty stomachs onto forage brassica crops.
 - Ensure sufficient quality water is available to stock at all times.
 - Ensure animals have access to roughage, such as hay, or access to dry pasture.



Top three take-home messages

1. Forage brassicas can be a cheap, high-quality feed source if planned and managed appropriately.
2. Be proactive in your management, not reactive.
3. Don't take shortcuts. If you're not sure, ask.

Tools, resources and training

- Seed companies and service providers, such as Roberts Ltd, provide excellent and up-to-date information on these products and should provide good after-sales advice.
- Australian Bureau of Meteorology – www.bom.gov.au (forecasting and historical data)
- www.dairyaustralia.com.au/Pastures-and-Feeding/Crops/Brassicas.aspx



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Thank You

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