

STUBBLE TURNIP PREFERRED VARIETIES



SAMSON

Samson can produce huge tankard shaped purple roots which are very palatable to both sheep and cattle. In trials Samson has shown to be **preferentially grazed** which can lead to higher intakes and live weight gains.

DELILAH

This is an exciting variety which has **out-performed** all existing varieties in our trials for a number of years. Delilah is ideal for fattening lambs and will produce **huge** white tankard shaped bulbs. Resistant to mildew.

RONDO

Rondo is a green skinned variety, suitable for sheep or cattle. It has a very leafy growth habit, with excellent disease resistance and can be utilised from September to early February. Rondo has **excellent root anchorage** which helps reduce wastage in the field.

TYFON

Tyfon is ideally sown in the spring and utilised in the summer months when grass growth generally declines. Tyfon should not be sown too early as it is susceptible to bolting. Tyfon's growth habit is very leafy with some **regrowth potential**.

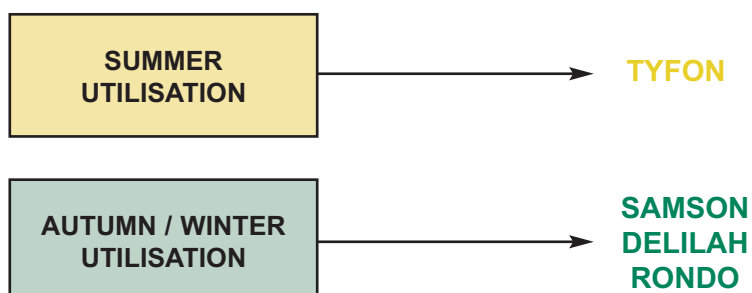


Samson



Delilah

Sowing Options



STUBBLE TURNIP HUSBANDRY INFORMATION

Soil Type/Site Selection

As a high proportion of the crop is leaf it is not practical to lift the crop for feeding and it is, therefore, important to choose sites which are suitable for grazing. A free draining light loam or brash pH of 6.5 or above is ideal.

Seedbed and Sowing Methods

If stubble turnips are to be sown after grass, firm fine seedbed conditions will be required and traditional cultivation's using the plough can be used.

If stubble turnips are drilled following an arable crop, a cereal for example, then tined cultivations, discing or rotavation can often replace the plough to achieve the necessary fine, shallow tilth.

In all cases it is most important that neither soil moisture nor time is lost through over-cultivation, otherwise poor crop establishment and a lower yield will be inevitable.

Sowing Dates and Rates

Stubble turnips should be sown approximately 12-14 weeks before they are to be utilised by stock. If sown in April, after forage rye, Italian ryegrass or an early spring fallow, turnips are very useful for finishing off spring lambs or feeding other stock from August to October. Stubble turnips also fit in well when sown in mid-June, after grazing or an early hay/silage cut, for autumn feeding, but they are now increasingly being used for autumn sowing on cereal stubbles.

Fertilisers

An application of 30 kg of nitrogen, 15 kg of phosphate and 15 kg of potash per acre is usually sufficient dressing for stubble turnips. Certainly, a dressing of between 30-40 kg of nitrogen per acre is especially important when the crop is being sown after a cereal because at this stage soil reserves are quite likely to be well depleted. The fertiliser should be worked well into the seedbed. A top dressing of nitrogen (up to 30 kg/acre) 3-4 weeks after sowing can boost crop growth.

Feeding

The stubble turnip crop is an attractive source of very palatable, easy to digest fodder and if it is used properly a winter feed program can be 'shortened' by several months.

Both cattle and sheep should be introduced gradually to the crop, and between grazings be able to run back on grass or have access to grass silage. It is also advisable to have hay or straw on offer prior to each grazing - particularly in the case of dairy cows. Stock take about three weeks to adjust fully to stubble turnips so it is a good idea to introduce the animals to the crop eight weeks after sowing so that by the time that they have become fully accustomed to this part of their diet, the crop will have reached its maximum yield and palatability.

It is important not to postpone the grazing once the crop is ready because the roots become hollow and there will be a steady loss of leaf when utilisation is delayed.

Throughout the grazing period adequate mineral supplements should be fed to all stock.

Some farmers have successfully big baled stubble turnips which have been fed to high yielding dairy herds. Around 20 kg of stubble turnips will be roughly equal in energy value to either 2 kg of barley or 4.5 kg of high quality hay.

Although the dry matter (DM) content of both root and leaf is quite low the quality of this DM is very good. Please note that environmental conditions can affect the nutritive value of specific crops.

Livestock Intake

A dairy cow will eat approximately 22.5 kg in a 2-3 hour grazing period and a lowland ewe about half that amount in a day. So an average autumn crop of 15.50 tonnes/acre (after allowing for wastage) should provide one day's grazing for 500 cows or 1,000 ewes. With beef animals an intake of 25 kg of stubble turnips per head per day should give lightweight gains in the order of 0.5 to 0.75 kg per head.

One point that must be borne in mind is that there is a slight risk that these turnips may taint the milk - so as a precaution it is better to give the cows access to the crop immediately after milking and then remove them from the field at least three hours before the next milking.

For efficient utilisation it is desirable that cattle be made to strip-graze the crop using an electric fence - with a maximum grazing period of three hours. With sheep a good quality netting can be used to control the grazing and limit the wastage factor.

