



Breakcrop Value

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The opportunities derived from this commodity far outweigh the challenges.

As well as offering considerable opportunities for **profitable production** and a range of **wider farm benefits**, the value of growing rapeseed as a break crop in cereal rotations cannot be under-estimated. Winter wheat following rapeseed farming typically yields nearly 10% more than the same crop preceded by another cereal, costs almost 10% less to produce and delivers a 25% gross margin advantage.

As a break from cereal production, well-managed winter rapeseed crop is effective in disrupting both the natural cycle of soil borne diseases like take-all, ergot and fusarium and any carry-over of foliar and stem-based diseases in volunteer cereals and alternative grass weed hosts.

It can also be valuable in restricting damage from insect pests surviving in the soil or in plant debris. As well as breaking these cycles of infection and infestation, the non-cereals physiology of the rapeseed crop allows a completely different armory of in-crop herbicides to be employed to deal with problem grass weeds, in particular. This is complemented by the highly competitive nature of the rapeseed crop, making it especially effective in smothering spring-germinating weeds. The value of growing winter rapeseed as a break crop is enhanced by the fact that it is sown earlier than most winter cereals, has different critical spray timings and can be harvested either before or after the most quality-sensitive wheats.

These differences enable farm workloads to be more effectively spread at the busiest times of the year, so insufficient operator or machinery capacity do not prevent the most timely management of every crop on the farm.

The ability to use precisely the same planting, spraying, fertilising and harvesting machinery to manage both rapeseed crop and cereal crops is another clear advantage over alternative root crops which require considerable additional equipment. This means the same capital investment can be employed across a wider area of cropping, reducing its annual cost/ha.

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