

What has or is damaging the leaves of the Swedes?

Sawfly is the culprit currently eating this crop. Siskin is a very good variety and has successfully beaten the flea beetle but it is now been eaten by black caterpillars of the Sawfly (Use Press article for detail) they are capable of decimating a crop and action needs to be taken immediately. Spraying is the only sensible option and there is product derogation for organic farms. Always follow instructions on the product labels. As for Agri- environment scheme crops which are unsprayed permission should be sought via the project officer.

How important is run back for forage crops?

Run back is always recommended, but in order to attain a utilization of 80% of the brassica crop the animals need to be at the face of the feed and another form of fibre can be used. Bales of haylage positioned within or close to the crop can provide the essential fibre source without having a runback which on an area of 17 acres would be getting increasingly further away from the feed face. No more than 70% of the diet should be brassica for beef and sheep.