

*****IMPORTANT ALERT*****
BE AWARE OF BRASSICA TOXICITY-ANEMIA!

In recent years, brassicas (forage turnips, rape, kale, cabbage and fodder radishes) have become popular, cheap forage plantings for white-tailed deer food plots. Although brassicas have been used for grazing, allowing animals such as white-tailed deer to consume large quantities can be dangerous. These plants often contain large quantities of the alkaloids, glucosinolates, thioglucosides and SMCO (S-methylcysteine sulphoxide), which are linked to a host of conditions including: poor performance, hemolytic anemia, goiter, nitrate/nitrite poisoning, rumen stasis (paralysis), polioencephalomalacia syndrome, bloat, embryonic death, poor conception, reduced birth weights, tongue extension, excess salivation, acute respiratory distress resulting in sudden death, blindness and diarrhea. Glucosinolate concentrations of as little as 0.4% by dry weight is considered to be toxic. Studies have reported concentrations in the tops and leaves of kales to be 1.2 to 6.3 grams per kilogram; and, forage rape or canola to range 2.9 to 11.9 grams per kilogram). Roots of turnips have concentrations as high or higher than those found in leaves and stems. The toxic dose of SMCO is 15 grams per 100 kilograms (fatal anemia) and 10 grams per 100 kilograms (low grade anemia). Concentrations of these chemicals are reported to increase immediately after a drought and frost conditions. The potential for poisoning is decreased if animals are encouraged to eat other forages or by using rotation grazing; both practices not practical with whitetails, since they tend to graze brassicas heavily during winter. If you use brassicas in your food plot program, you should take care to limit acreage and combine with other plants less toxic to ruminants.

For more information, Google SMCO, brassica toxicity, brassica anemia