

## Rape Straw For Bedding

Most rape straw is normally chopped to clear fields as quickly as possible for replanting. One of the problems with rape straw is its very stemmy structure giving the appearance of an uncomfortable bed. However it is this strong, long structure which makes it a good bedding material, keeping the stock on top of the bed and allowing good drainage through it. This is particularly beneficial for the early part of the winter when sheds are initially bedded. For subsequent bedding rotate rape straw with conventional straw.

The other problem can be the difficulty in rolling the bale out. The risk of this is minimised if the straw is baled very dry. However an alternative approach would be to bale some of the crop using a chopper baler which would make rolling out and bedding much easier. However for people using straw blowers the difficulty in unrolling the bale should not be a problem – although it might increase diesel consumption.

Round bales of rape straw are less robust than hay/silage bales so handle them carefully.

With careful management rape straw can make a significant contribution towards bedding supplies early in the season and, when straw is short, release cereal straw for feeding.

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