

## Glucosinolate Levels in the UK, 1990

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The NIAB is responsible for assessing the performance of oilseed rape varieties, grown at a number of different sites throughout the country. Data from NIAB trials for 1990 show that the mean level of glucosinolates in the varieties Cobra and Libravo (the two most widely grown varieties commercially) was about 18  $\mu$ moles. The mean content of the varieties currently being Provisionally Recommended by the NIAB was around 16  $\mu$ moles, with some varieties averaging below 14  $\mu$ moles. There would thus seem to be some reason to be cautiously optimistic about the continuing downward trend in the mean glucosinolate content of varieties. However, the variability in varietal glucosinolate levels must never be overlooked. All varieties show considerable variation in glucosinolate content from site to site within a given year and even the best varieties may exceed the 20  $\mu$ mole level on occasions. There is also a seasonal effect. For instance, the NIAB data for spring oilseed rape for 1990 indicated that in three of the four trials, most varieties were averaging over 20  $\mu$ moles and some in excess of 35  $\mu$ moles, in contrast to the more usual situation in which spring varieties have a generally lower glucosinolate content than winter varieties.

NIAB also undertakes the analysis of commercially grown crops. The mean glucosinolate content of these (predominantly Cobra, Libravo and Lictor) was 23  $\mu$ moles, with a range from below the 35  $\mu$ mole qualifying standard for double low premium but that only 33% were below the proposed 20  $\mu$ mole standard.