



Common Weeds Poisonous to Grazing Livestock

Part A

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INTRODUCTION







Livestock can be poisoned or injured by certain plants while grazing or fed in stored feed. The OMAF Factsheet "*Poisoning of Livestock by Plants*," Agdex 130/643, reviews the types of poisoning which can occur and the effects on animal health and production.






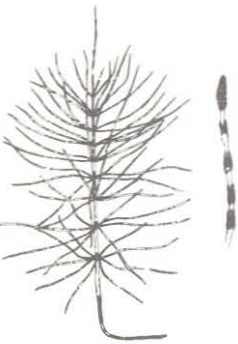
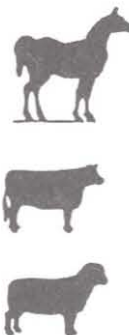
Many common weeds in Ontario can poison livestock. This Factsheet and its companion "*Common Weeds Toxic to Grazing Animals — Part B*," Agdex 130/643, identify these weeds and describe the symptoms of poisoning. Because some poisons act very fast (as with the hemlocks) by the time the symptoms are evident, the chances of saving the animal are very slight. It is, therefore, important to learn to recognize these weeds beforehand and



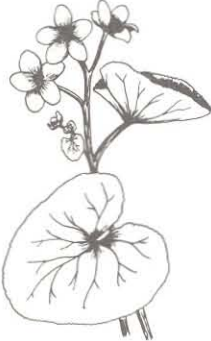


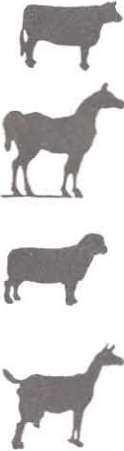
prevent poisoning from occurring. Most of these weeds can be controlled chemically or mechanically. In some cases, it may be more practical to simply fence off infested areas so that the animals do not have access to particularly hazardous weeds.






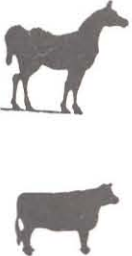
It should be noted that most of these weeds are unpalatable and animals will usually not graze them if given the choice. One of the most important steps in preventing animal suffering or loss is good pasture management. Keeping the desirable forage species producing throughout the grazing season, reduces the possibility of animals grazing poisonous weeds.

If symptoms of poisoning should occur, it is recommended that you call your veterinarian as soon as possible.

Weed	Where generally located	Livestock affected	Symptoms
HEMLOCK Poison Hemlock* 	waste areas roadsides dry ditches	  	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - death may occur within 15 minutes - frothing at the mouth - uneasiness - pain - dilated pupils - clamping of jaws - grating of teeth - vomiting - weak, rapid pulse - diarrhea
Water Hemlock* 	wet pastures stream banks pond edges lake edges wet ditches edges of wet woods		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - bloating - convulsions - respiratory failure - death

Weed	Where generally located	Livestock affected	Symptoms
<p>BRACKEN FERN*</p> 	<p>open fields woodlands low ground dry, rocky soils</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - symptoms are slow to develop - loss of flesh - jaundice - loss of appetite - weakness - staggering gait - excitability - paralysis
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - symptoms are slow to develop - high fever - labored breathing - drooling - hemorrhaging from nostrils - blood in urine and feces - convulsions
<p>MARSH ARROW-GRASS</p> 	<p>marshes alkaline soils</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - symptoms appear rapidly - rapid, difficult breathing - almond odor to breath - animals go down with head turned to one side
<p>HORSETAIL*</p> 	<p>poorly drained soils low, sandy, acid soils cultivated fields roadsides waste areas woods</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - symptoms are slow to develop - jaundice - loss of appetite - weakness - staggering gait - excitability - paralysis

Weed	Where generally located	Livestock affected	Symptoms
<p>POKEWEED*</p> 	<p>(southern Ontario only) waste areas meadows edges of woods</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - symptoms occur two or more hours after plants are eaten - retching spasms - vomiting - purging - convulsions
<p>MARSH MARIGOLD*</p> 	<p>wet areas</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - acute inflammation of the gastrointestinal tract - vomiting - colic - bloody urine - diarrhea - twitching of the eyelids - weak pulse - loud breathing - reduced milk production - tainted milk red in colour and bitter tasting
<p>TALL BUTTERCUP*</p> 	<p>pastures meadows roadsides</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - inflammation and blisters where plant juice touched the animal - mouth blisters cause drooling and loss of appetite - other symptoms similar to those for marsh marigold

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<p>WILD CHERRIES Choke # Pin ## Black</p> 	<p>fence rows open woods</p>		<p>– same as with marsh arrow-grass poisoning</p>
<p>LUPINE</p> 	<p>pastures meadows roadsides waste areas</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – nervousness – labored breathing – convulsions – frothing at the mouth – frenzy – aimless running about
<p>SAINT JOHN'S-WORT*</p> 	<p>roadsides pastures</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – photosensitivity – inflammation of the unpigmented portion of the skin – affected area becomes sore and reddened and may peel – tongue and mouth may be affected

* Described in Ontario Weeds, Publication 505