Poisonous Plants in Pastures

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Common Misconceptions

- "I have never had an animal poisoned from eating toxic plants"
 - Just because death doesn't result, does not mean the animal was not poisoned.

Types of Toxicity

- Acute One time exposure, very damaging, animal dies within feet of the specimen or soon thereafter.
 - Rare
- Chronic Repeat exposure over long periods of time. Common symptom is wasting.
 - Very common; not all toxic plants kill the animal

Common Misconceptions

- "I have never had an animal poisoned from eating toxic plants"
 - Poisoned and death due to poisoning is not the same thing.
- Poisonous plants in hay are safe
- You can't poison a goat

Sensitivity to poisonous plants

- Species
 - Sheep/Horses >> cows >> goats
- Age of animal
 - Young and old animals are more sensitive to poisonous plants.
- Time of year
 - Many plants are most toxic in the fall. Toxins commonly accumulate in the seeds.

Why are toxic plants eaten?

Plants produce toxins to discourage grazing

Often results in bad taste or smell.

- 1. When desirable grazing is scarce.
- 2. Young animals exploring.
- 3. We give them bad food.
- 4. Some animals are repeat offenders.

I think my animal is poisoned, what do I look for?

- Standing alone
- Acts disoriented
- Holds head down
- Refuses feed
- Drinks large amounts of water
- Wasting
- Shaggy coat

Next step: call your county agent

Common Poisonous Plants

Cherry



- Many different species
- All are toxic

Laurel Cherry

Black Cherry and Persimmon

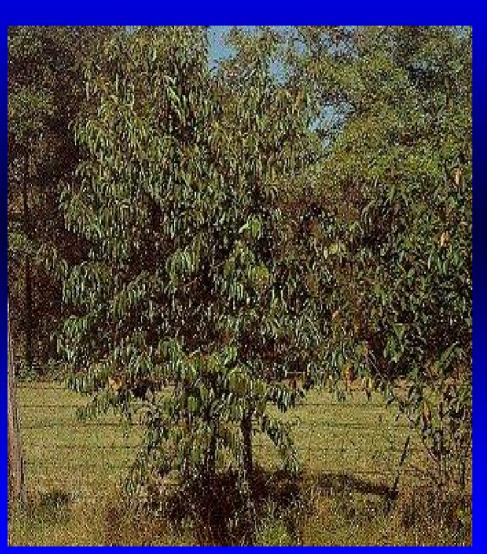


Black Cherry and Persimmon



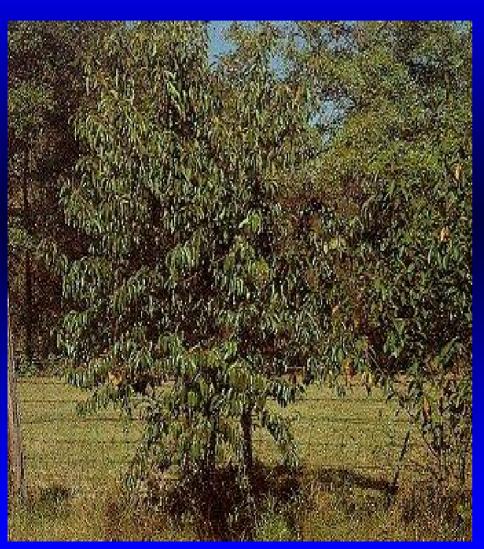


Black Cherry



- All parts extremely toxic
- Wilted leaves are the worst
- Toxin: cyanide
- All animals are susceptible, but especially ruminats

Black Cherry



- Symptoms: staggering or convulsions within 15 to 30 minutes; death within 1 hour
- Control: cut down and remove tree, treat stump to prevent resprouts

Azaleas



- All parts toxic
- •Toxin: glycosides that affect stomach and intestines
- Symptoms: nausea, weakness, salivating
- Death is rare and most cattle recover without treatment

Bracken Fern



Bracken Fern



- Toxic parts: whole plant, particularly roots.
- Toxin: thiaminase
 - Horse: vitamin B₁
 deficiency
 - Cow: Hemorrhaging
- Symptoms:
 - Horse: high fever and incoordination
 - Cattle: swelling and bloody waste

Bracken Fern



- Poisoning is usually cumulative and can occur over many weeks.
- Sheep and goats are less susceptible.
- Control: mow, use
 Cimarron, spot treat
 with glyphosate.

Lantana



Lantana



- Escaped ornamental.
- Commonly found along fencerows and tree lines.

Lantana



- Toxic parts: whole plant
- Toxin: lantanin
- Symptoms
 - Large quantities: acute toxicity
 - Lower amounts: mouth sores and skin cracking
- Recovery is rare.
- Control: Removal

Coffee Senna



Coffee Senna





Sicklepod

Senna vs sicklepod



Coffee Senna



- Toxic parts: all, but mainly seeds
- Toxin: unknown
- Symptoms: wasting or dark brown urine
- Large quantities must be eaten

Coffee Senna



- Poisoning most common in fall soon after frost
- Control: mowing after frost or herbicides

Crotalaria or Rattlebox



Crotalaria



- Toxic parts: whole plant, especially the seeds.
- Toxin: monocrotaline
- Symptoms:
 weakness and
 confusion. Jaundice
 due to liver damage
 may occur.

Crotalaria



- Animal may die months after ingestion.
- Control: little
 herbicide data is
 available. Glyphosate
 or triclopyr is likely
 best option. Repeat
 mowing is also
 possible.

Nightshade



- Toxic Parts:
 primarily berries
 with leaves to a
 lesser degree.
 Green berries are
 most toxic.
- Toxin: the alkaloid solanine

Nightshade



- Symptoms: acute toxicity or progressive unthriftyness and gastric distress
- Nightshade is very unpalatable and animals will rarely eat enough to result in death.

Perilla mint



- Toxic Parts:
 whole plant,
 especially the
 flowers
- Toxin: perilla ketone
- Symptoms: labored breathing

Perilla mint



- Commonly found in shaded areas: along tree lines or next to buildings
- Control: 2,4-D or Crossbow are effective.
- Toxicity most common in the fall

Conclusions

- Animals generally don't want to eat toxic plants
- Weed toxicity is all about
 - 1. Timing
 - 2. Amount
- Grazing management and proper fencing is the best safeguard against toxic weeds
- Mowing, particularly in the fall, is also a good defense against weeds.
- You may not have had animals die, but reduced weight gain can cost lots of money