

Crotolaria spp

Common name:

Rattlepods

Palatability to Livestock:

Seldom eaten.

Toxicity to Goats:

Moderate risk.

Toxicity to Other Species:

Toxic to horses, cattle, pigs, and to a lesser extent, sheep.

Poisonous Principle:

. Pyrrolizidine alkaloids.

Effects:

Signs and symptoms;

- . Sometimes chronic weight loss.
- . Sometimes acute jaundice, with or without photosensitization.
- . Sometimes sudden death, with no other signs.

Health and Production Problems;

- . Chronic ingestion of this plant may lead to significant liver damage and subsequent reduced long term productivity.
- . Chronically damaged livers in some ruminants are inclined to accumulate excessive amounts of copper, which can ultimately be released and kill the animal in the process.

Treatment;

Be aware of potential stock problems.

Integrated Control Strategy:

- . Do not feed garden clippings to any livestock.
- . Variable control, as some species are ornamental, others are fodder plants, yet others are toxic.

Comments:

- . Goats and sheep may tolerate many months of ingestion, but eventually risk being poisoned if the plant has been eaten in significant amounts for more than one season.
- . Leaves are alternate.
- . Growth habits are very varied, but all have pea shaped flowers, mostly yellow, with the keel petal forming a narrow beak.
- . Of the 37 species native or naturalized in Australia, about 16 are toxic to livestock.
- . The ripe seeds become loose in the pods, and rattle when shaken.
- . Found in NSW, Queensland, and the NT.
- . This species causes the widest range of tissue damage in domesticated animals, giving rise to liver damage, lung lesions, kidney lesions,



Picture: *Crotolaria* flowers

Further Reading:

- . Dowling and McKenzie. Poisonous Plants. 1993.
- . Everist. Poisonous Plants of Australia. 1981.
- . Henry, Hall, Jordan, Milson, Scheffe, and Silcock. Pasture Plants of Southern Inland Qld. 1995.
- . Simmonds, Holst and Bourke, Palatability and Potential Toxicity of Australian Weeds to Goats. 2000.
- . Wilson. Some Plants are Poisonous. 1997.