

Papaver somniferum

Common name:

Opium poppy,

Palatability to Livestock:

Low.

Toxicity to Goats:

Low risk.

Toxicity to Other Species:

Potentially toxic to all livestock species.

Poisonous Principle:

- . Isoquinoline alkaloids,
- . Morphine, codeine and resins,
- . Rhoeadine, in milky sap.

Effects:

Signs and symptoms;

- . Gastro-enteritis,
- . Loss of appetite,
- . Ill-thrift,
- . In humans, increased respiration rate, excitation and coma.

Health and Production Problems;

- . General loss of productivity,
- . Loss of milk production.

Treatment;

Be aware of potential stock problems.

Integrated Control Strategy:

- . This is a “Declared Noxious Weed” in all parts of Australia,
- . It must be destroyed under police supervision.

Comments:

- . An annual plant with thick, erect stems up to 1 metre high.
- . The leaves are bluish green and smooth, with wavy margins, toothed but not deeply cut.

- . Flowers are on long, smooth, erect stalks, with five petals, in shades of white, lilac and purple, late spring flowering.
- . The pod is globular, dull green, with ray-like ridges at the top, containing the seeds.
- . Dried latex from the unripe pods contains opium,
- . There have been no cases of poisoning in livestock reported in Australia.
- . May be grown as commercial crops in Tasmania under license. See picture.
- . All parts are toxic, especially unripe capsules.



“Field of poppies”



Picture: Papaver hybrid. Weed control Lucerne 1992

Further Reading:

- . Everist. . Poisonous Plants of Australia. 1981
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- . Paterson. Herbs in the Garden. 1985.
- . Shepherd. Pretty but Poisonous. 2004
- . Wilson. Some Plants are Poisonous. 1997.