

## *Ambrosia artemisifolia*

### **Common name:**

Annual ragweed, Horseweed,

### **Palatability to Livestock:**

Not known to be eaten.

### **Toxicity to Goats:**

Low risk.

### **Toxicity to Other Species:**

Potentially toxic to all grazing livestock.

### **Poisonous Principle:**

Nitrates.

### **Effects:**

#### *Signs and symptoms;*

- . Nitrate poisoning causes respiratory distress, and darkening of the gums.

#### *Health and Production Problems;*

- . Affected animals may be found dead, or die very quickly.
- . Some may recover.
- . Allergenic to humans, causing allergic rhinitis from the pollen.
- . Contributes to veg fault in fleece.

#### *Treatment;*

- . Try large amounts of Vitamin C, and dolomite.

### **Integrated Control Strategy:**

Use herbicides, (Group I).

- . Biological control agents are being tested.
- . Hand pull small plants when the soil is wet.
- . Avoid pollen if plants are in flower.
- . Sow to improved pasture.
- . Has an allelopathic effect on some onions, oats and lolium species.

### **Comments:**

- . Nitrate accumulating plants are frequently grazed without any adverse effects, providing stock are allowed to adapt to them slowly.

- . The seed oil has potential for paint and varnish manufacture.
- . An annual, shallow-rooted, erect plant, growing up to 200 cms high, with branched brownish stems and fine green leaves.
- . Male and female flowers are pale cream to green, during summer to autumn.
- . The seed has an awl-shaped beak, and a ring of spines.
- . A serious weed of crops, spread by seed, germinating in spring.
- . In pastures it has a nutrient composition equivalent to lucerne.
- . Eaten at flowering and seeding, but not when dried off. Cattle eat it in the early growth stages, however, they may get a sore mouth.
- . It is unpalatable to horses.
- . A nuisance weed of coastal NSW and SE Queensland.



Picture: *Ambrosia artemisifolia* Wikipedia

### **Further Reading:**

- . Auld and Medd. Weeds. 1992
- . Huggins and Lucy. Weeds of Southern Qld. 1997
- . Noxious Weeds of Aust. Parsons and Cuthbertson
- . Roth. Weeds, Friend or Foe. 2001
- . Simmonds, Holst and Bourke. Palatability and Potential Toxicity of Australian Weeds to Goats. 2000
- . Swarbrick and Skarratt. Bushweed 2 Database 1997