**Avena spp**

**Common name:**
Wild oats,

**Palatability to Livestock:**
High.

**Toxicity to Goats:**
Nil, in favorable conditions.

**Toxicity to Other Species:**
Nil, in favorable conditions.

**Poisonous Principle:**
- Nitrates.
- Capable of poisoning stock under some circumstances (Everist).
- Oat crops affected with “yellow dwarf” virus can cause problems, in autumn.

**Effects:**
*Signs and symptoms;*
- Nitrate poisoning,
  Rapid breathing, rapid heart rate,
  Blood becomes a chocolate colour,
- Grass tetany, (magnesium deficiency)
  Excitability, muscle tremors,
- Photosensitization, (unknown cause),
- Smut fungus poisoning,

*Health and Production Problems;*
- Grazing oats can cause problems, especially in cold, windy weather when cold stress becomes a factor.
- Nitrate and nitrite poisoning.
- Grass tetany, a magnesium imbalance.
- Rickets and bone fragility,
  (carotene – calcium – phosphorus imbalance.)
- Photosensitization.

**Treatment:**
Be aware of potential stock problems.

**Integrated Control Strategy:**
- Use goats.
- Chemical control.
- Top-dressing with nitrogenous fertilizers increases the risk of toxic amounts of nitrate accumulating in the plant.

**Comments:**
- An annual tufted grass growing up to 45 cms high.
- Plants look similar to common oats, but the seed heads droop.
- Leaves are bluish-green, with a soft hollow centre.
- Germinates in autumn, and grows in winter.

**Further Reading:**