**Leucaena leucocephala**

**Common name:**
Leucaena,

**Palatability to Livestock:**
Moderate.

**Toxicity to Goats:**
Moderate.

**Toxicity to Other Species:**
Cattle, sheep, horses.

**Poisonous Principle:**
Mimosine, a goitrogenic compound.

**Effects:**
*Signs and symptoms;*
- Excitability,
- Lack of weight gain, stomatitis,
- Goitre,
- Incoordination,
- Hair or fleece loss,
- Cataracts.

*Health and Production Problems;*
- Shedding of fleece.
- Weight loss.

*Treatment;*
- Remove animals before troubles occur.
- Provide varied diet.
- Drench ruminants with mimosine-degrading bacterium to degrade toxins, which will spread to all animals in the herd..

**Integrated Control Strategy:**
- A good fodder plant provided animals do not overeat.
- See local Council for any restrictions.

**Comments:**
- An imported species being developed as a high protein browse plant in Australia.
- Some varieties have caused fleece loss in sheep due to the high mimosine content.
- The “Hawaiian” variety is the common type naturalized in northern Australia.
- A large shrub which will form thickets and become invasive if not controlled.
- Leaves are fern like, bright to dull green, alternate and compound.
- Flowers are creamy pom-poms on stalks, usually near the ends of the branches.
- Pods are dark brown and flat, with seed corrugations.
- Ideal for tropical forage production, but can spread naturally and is becoming an invasive weed in coastal, riverine and agricultural land.
- Withstands Dry Seasons, but grows poorly on acid soils, and is very susceptible to frost.
- Native to Central America, but becoming naturalized all over the world.
- Excellent source of high quality protein, but if eaten in excess over a period of weeks, will cause toxic effects with hyperexcitability as a first symptom.
- Horses are particularly vulnerable to toxic effects from overeating.

Picture: *Leucaena leucocephala* issg.org.

**Further Reading:**
- DPI QLD.
- McKenzie. Veterinary Clinical Toxicology. 2000.

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