

## *Senecio quadridentatus*

### **Common name:**

Cotton fireweed,

### **Palatability to Livestock:**

High at all stages.

### **Toxicity to Goats:**

Low risk.

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

Toxic to horses, pigs, cattle and sheep.

### **Poisonous Principle:**

Pyrrolizidine alkaloids.

### **Effects:**

*Signs and symptoms;*

- . Chronic weight loss,
- . Acute jaundice,
- . Maybe photosensitization, especially in white animals.

*Health and Production Problems;*

- . Eating an excess of this plant may lead to chronic liver damage.
- . Reduced long term productivity.
- . Damaged livers in some ruminants may accumulate excess copper which can kill the animal.

*Treatment;*

- . None.

### **Integrated Control Strategy:**

- . Goats really enjoy this plant.
- . Graze at early flowering.
- . Tolerant to selective herbicides.
- . Variability of the climate may lead to a natural increase or decrease in plant numbers.

### **Comments:**

- . A perennial, small, slender herb with erect branched, woolly stems.
- . Leaves are narrow, pale green and cottony.

. Yellow flowerheads are small and narrow, in clusters at the end of stalks.

. Seeds are long and narrow, with a tuft of hairs at one end.

. Found in all states of Australia.

. Poisoning takes time to show – chronic scouring, followed by sudden death.

. Drought resistant.

. Growth is favoured by super top dressing.



Picture: *Senecio quadridentatus*  
Helen Simmonds. Calga NSW

### **Further Reading:**

- . Auld and Medd Weeds. 1992
- . Kohnke. Feeding and Nutrition of Horses. 1998
- . McBarron. Poisonous Plants, Handbook. 1983
- . Simmonds, Holst and Bourke. Palatability and Potential Toxicity of Australian Weeds to Goats. 2000