**Sorghum halepense**

**Common name:**
Johnson grass, Aleppo grass, Evergreen millet

**Palatability to Livestock:**
High at all stages.

**Toxicity to Goats:**
Moderate risk.

**Toxicity to Other Species:**
Toxic to sheep, cattle and horses.

**Poisonous Principle:**
- Cyanogenetic glycocides,
- Nitrates,
- Unknown neurotoxin.

**Effects:**
*Signs and symptoms;*
Cyanide poisoning causes animals to –
- Stagger and fall, shiver,
- Fast deep breathing,
- Weak rapid pulse.
Nitrate poisoning causes –
- Loss of appetite,
- Difficult breathing, frothing at the mouth,
- Rapid weak pulse,
- Shivers, leg weakness, incoordination.
Sorghum nervous ataxia causes –
- Limb weakness,
- Incoordination, trembling.
- Occasionally animals may appear blind, or
deaf, and be unable to use their tongues and
jaws in a normal manner.

*Health and Production Problems;*
- These toxins may cause sudden death.
- Pregnant animals may drop affected off-spring, with twisted limbs, or big heads.

*Treatment;*
- Try a molasses drench.
- See Vet.

**Integrated Control Strategy:**
- For goats, excellent fodder provided there is also a mixed pasture to balance the diet.
- Spread by creeping rootstock.
- Slash and burn in summer.
- Spray regrowth before flowering to prevent seeding, use Herbicide, Group D.
- Declared “Noxious” in all NSW.

**Comments:**
- Native of North America.
- Pernicious weed because of tough horizontal rhizomes, and it invades cultivation, sending up shoots through the soil.
- Naturalized in all states.
- A perennial giant grass, often streaked with reddish brown.
- In summer, flower panicles appear at the top of the plant, often collapsing the head.
- Seed heads tend to slope away from the central stem.

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**Further Reading:**
- AGDEX 647.
- Dowling and McKenzie. Poisonous Plants.1994
- Parsons and Cuthbertson. 
- Roth. Weeds. Friend or Foe. 2001

Information included in this Info Sheet was obtained from the source documents, and no responsibility will be accepted by the compiler.