Sorghum X almum

**Common name:**
Columbus grass,

**Palatability to Livestock:**
High, young shoots.

**Toxicity to Goats:**
Moderate.

**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 offspring, with twisted limbs, or big heads.

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

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

**Comments:**
. Summer growing perennial, more vigorous than Johnson grass, with good drought resistance.
. Rhizomes usually present, shorter and stouter, usually curved downwards, then up at the tips.
. Seed heads are large, and usually black and shiny.
. Natural hybrid between Johnson grass and a cultivar of *S. vulgare*.
. Introduced into Australia from Argentina as a fodder grass in mid-1900’s.
. Now a forage crop in northern NSW and southern and central Qld.

**Comments:**

**Picture: Sorghum X almum  iinet.net.au**

**Further Reading:**
. AGDEX.
. Parsons and Cuthbertson.

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