



# PLANTS and OTHER MATERIALS POISONOUS TO LIVESTOCK



SILVERY LUPINE.

Prepared By:

O. A. Stevens

Professor of Botany in the School of  
Applied Arts and Sciences, and Botanist  
in the Agricultural Experiment Station.

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**PLANTS AND OTHER MATERIALS  
POISONOUS TO LIVESTOCK**

Many animals die each summer and poisonous plants are often suspected of being the reason. Often the cause of death is hard to determine from examination of either the feed or the animal's body. Among other possible causes to be suspected are: Lightning, blackleg, anthrax, acute bloat and chlorate poisoning.

A few plants contain virulently poisonous substance. Others have materials injurious only if taken in large quantities or over a period of time. In any case the hazards are greatly increased if the animals are in poor condition or if forage is lacking in either quantity or quality. In times of scarcity animals may feed upon injurious plants which otherwise would not be eaten.

Poisonous plants are not numerous. They are not of great importance but they are one of the hazards to livestock. They are somewhat like fires, highway and other accidents. They do not strike often but when they do the results may be serious to the particular farmer. Following is a list of possible sources of poisoning, both to animals and to humans.

● ANGEL'S TRUMPET - A garden ornamental. Seed very poisonous.

● ARROWGRASS - A grass-like plant, grows in marshy places, contains prussic acid and may cause sudden death if eaten in quantity. Occurs all over North Dakota.

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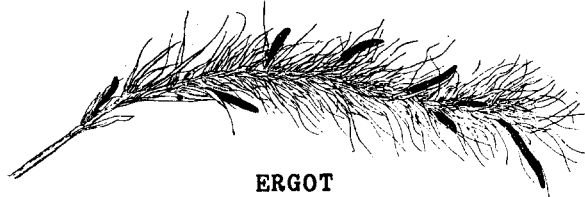
● CHokecherry - Leaves may contain prussic acid.



COCKLEBUR

● COCKLEBUR - Seedlings (usually in May) are poisonous to pigs. Often grows around barnyards and along stream banks.

● CORN - A large feed of fresh green corn will cause death. See also Scab.



ERGOT

● ERGOT - Blackened, diseased seeds of grain, especially of rye, contain strong poisons. Rusted and smutted material is not injurious, but see Scab.

● FLAX - Green flax in the fall and chaff of flax from threshing may contain prussic acid.

● HALOGETON - This relative of Russian thistle is not yet (1950) found in North Dakota but may appear any year. It is to be expected along

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roadsides or on bare, poor soil. It grows only where little else grows. The poisonous principle is an excess of oxalic acid. It quickly kills sheep if eaten in quantity.

● HAY FEVER - Caused by pollen from a great variety of plants, especially ragweed. A doctor should be consulted for tests.

● POISON HEMLOCK - A tall, parsnip-like plant from Europe has been found in one locality. It is very poisonous but no cases have been reported.

● WATER HEMLOCK - A native plant, frequent in low meadows or wet places, very poisonous, especially the thick roots which smell something like parsnips. Believed not to be harmful in hay.

● HENBANE - A coarse, introduced weed found around towns; also river valleys in the West. Flowers, seeds and roots very poisonous; not likely to be eaten except seeds or roots by small children.

● HORSETAIL, or SCOURING RUSH - Leafless stemmed plants, common in moist ground. Reported injurious but not known to have caused trouble here.

● LARKSPUR - One small species occurs on prairie in extreme western North Dakota. It might cause trouble in spring.

● LOCO WEED - One species is common especially westward, on prairie. It acts slowly and is not known to be troublesome here.

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● LUPINE - One species found only in southwestern North Dakota. Pods and seeds are poisonous to sheep.

● MILKVETCH - State has many species. Most are harmless but one purple and two yellow flowered ones are selenium converters. Plants are coarse and not usually eaten. See Selenium.

● MUSHROOMS - No poisonous species are known to occur but none should be used unless known to be safe. Some are irritating to some persons. The deadly ones give no warning and cannot be distinguished by any simple tests.

● NITRATES - Under some conditions potassium nitrate accumulates in leaves in abnormally large amounts and causes poisoning. This has happened in oat hay or straw grown on rich soil, in burning bush (Kochia) and in sugar beets after spraying with 2,4-D.

● OLEANDER - Sometimes but not often grown here as a houseplant. The leaves are poisonous to both man and livestock.



POISON IVY

● POISON IVY - A common small shrub, especially, in wooded or brushy places. Produces skin blisters on contact with most people. Not troublesome to livestock.

● RAPE - Frozen rape has shown indications of being poisonous to pigs.

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● SCAB - A gray or pink fungus on heads of grain and in ears of corn. On barley it has caused losses in pigs.

● SELENIUM - This chemical element is common in clay soils of western North Dakota. When absorbed by "converter plants" (here chiefly three species of milk vetch) it is poisonous to animals eating these plants. Also the decaying plants leave it in condition to be absorbed by vegetables and grains. Such soils are not likely to be used for a garden but should be avoided. The trouble caused by it was formerly known as alkali disease and resulted in sloughing of hoofs, tails, etc.

● SPRAY MATERIALS - Many chemicals used for controlling insects, diseases and weeds are poisonous to man. The containers in which the chemicals are sold carry instructions on use and should be followed carefully.

● SUDANGRASS - Sometimes contains excessive prussic acid when injured by frost or drouth. A quantity of such material will kill animals in a few minutes.

● SNEEZEWEED - Found in wet places, sometimes in quantity in potholes, especially northeast. Reported poisonous to sheep.

● SWEET CLOVER - Losses have occurred from moldy hay.

● WEED SEEDS - Cockle seeds contain a poisonous substance and some other seeds may be irritating. Weed seeds are not a likely cause of poisoning but the use of unground or unheated weed seeds is one way in which these seeds become scattered to fields.

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