

SOUTH EAST COUNTRY VETS

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LANTANA POISONING IN CATTLE

Lantana (*Lantana camara* and *Lantana montevidensis*) is a shrub that was once grown as garden ornamentals and is now a major weed across all states and territories of Australia. It is one of the country's most invasive and debilitating weeds due to its effects on primary industries, conservation and the extent of its distribution.

WHAT DOES LANTANA LOOK LIKE?

Lantana is a heavily branched, thicket forming shrub that ranges from 2-4m in height. The creeping version is a low woody shrub that grows over rocks and along tree branches. Lantana is easily recognized by its vibrant flowers that vary in colour from red-yellow, orange-pink and white depending on the location and plant maturity. Lantana is mostly seen in coastal and sub-tropical areas however it can survive in dry areas as well.



SUSCEPTABLE SPECIES

Cattle, sheep, goats and camelids are affected by the plants. Lantana is not toxic to humans unless berries are ingested.

TOXICITY

All variants of lantana are thought to be toxic with the red-flowered forms most toxic to stock. Most cases of lantana poisoning occur when animals are introduced to an area where toxic forms of lantana grows or during droughts when other feed sources are scarce.

SIGNS OF LANTANA POISONING

Signs of lantana poisoning depend on the type of lantana consumed, how much of it and the intensity of sunlight. Signs include:

- Depression, loss of appetite
- Constipation, frequent urination
- Jaundice (yellow discolouration) of the insides of the eyes, mouth and vulva
- Drooling and weeping eyes
- Inflammation/peeling of the un-pigmented skin (e.g. muzzle, white areas on coat, feet)
- Severely affected animals may have a short period of diarrhea with black strong smelling faeces
- Death may take between 2d-3wks depending on the severity

DIAGNOSIS

Diagnosis is based on the animal's access to lantana and clinical signs shown (e.g. jaundice).

TREATMENT

Contact your local veterinarian immediately if you suspect an animal is suffering from lantana poisoning. Unless treated quickly and effectively, animals may die within a week of ingesting the plant.

- move animal to a lantana free area
- place in the shade at all times due to sun sensitivity
- early diagnosed animals may be drenched with activated charcoal to reduce toxin absorption
- provide fresh water and good quality hay at all times
- give oral electrolytes or intravenous fluids if animal is severely dehydrated
- antibiotics and anti-inflammatories

HOW TO PREVENT LANTANA POISONING

Follow these key points to prevent your animals from being poisoned by lantana.

- Treat all lantana as being poisonous
- Keep your property lantana free – weed control is paramount
- Ensure stock have adequate feed at all times
- Never put new/young stock in areas where lantana is present
- Act quickly if poisoning is suspected – call your vet immediately