**Cucumis myriocarpus**

**Common name:**
Paddy melon, Prickly paddy melon.

**Palatability to Livestock:**
. Moderate.
. Minimise grazing of fruit.

**Toxicity to Goats:**
Low risk.

**Toxicity to Other Species:**
. Potentially toxic to sheep, cattle, horses and pigs. Ruminants most affected.
. Circumstantial evidence, nothing proven.

**Poisonous Principle:**
. Tetracyclic triterpenes.

**Effects:**
*Signs and symptoms;*
. Severe diarrhoea.

*Health and Production Problems;*
. Sometimes rapid death, without diarrhoea.

*Treatment;*
. Be aware of potential stock problems.
. The bitter flavour appears to be addictive to some animals.

**Integrated Control Strategy:**
. Use goats.
. Herbicides, heavy grazing, and cultivation.
. This is a declared “Noxious Weed” in parts of Western Australia.

**Comments:**
. Rarely eaten by livestock, which minimises the number of stock poisoned.
. A summer growing annual vine, with rough stems, about 2 metres long, with tendrils, and a slender tap-root.
. The leaves are divided into five lobes, and hairy underneath, alternate, dark to yellowish green, rough, with one prominent central vein and numerous side veins; leaves are on slender stalks.
. Pale yellow flowers on stalks in small groups in the leaf axils.
. The plant has both male and female flowers.
. The fruits are globular, about three cms in diameter, light and dark green stripes, turning yellow at maturity. They are covered in soft, hooked bristles.
. Fruit is bitter and acts as an emetic.
. Seeds are embedded in a pale green pulp.
. Infests pasture and cultivated areas during the warmer months of the year.
. Ripe fruits are the most toxic, but unpalatable.
. Often abundant after summer rain.
. Affected animals never recover. Horses may develop an addiction to the melon.
. Animals may also become deaf, or blind.
. **NB.** Feeding trials have all proved negative.
. Native to eastern Africa, found all over Australia.

Further Reading:
. Henry, Hall, Jordan, Milson, Schefeand Silcock. Pasture Plants of Southern Inland Queensland.. 1995
. McKenzie. Veterinary Clinical Toxicology. 2000

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