**Hypericum perforatum**

**Common name:**
St John’s wort, Goat weed

**Palatability to Livestock:**
High, before flowering.

**Toxicity to Goats:**
Moderate risk.

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

**Poisonous Principle:**
Hypericin and pseudohypericin.

**Effects:**
*Signs and symptoms;*
- Mild diarrhoea,
- Skin irritation, especially round head,
- Reddening and swelling of face and ears,
- Hind limb weakness,
- Increased pulse and body temperature,
- Excess salivation, and panting.

*Health and Production Problems;*
- Affected animals avoid the sun,
- Rub sore faces raw, resulting in scabs.
- Chronic ill-thrift and loss of productivity,

*Treatment;*
- Provide shade.
- Try local application of Condy’s crystals.

**Integrated Control Strategy:**
- Goats will control this weed in native pasture, allowing cattle and sheep to be run as well.
- Herbicides and superphosphate at high rates.
- Spray with 2,4-D, Grazon® or Glyphosate, in October/November, at flowering.
- Biological controls are being tested.

**Comments:**
- Perennial with extensive creeping rhizomes.
- Flowering upright branched stems up to one metre high, grow from a central woody crown.
- Leaves are opposite and narrow with no stalks.
- Margins usually curved downwards, and with a blunt tip.
- Leaves are a yellow-green, dotted with clear oil glands that give a perforated appearance when held to the light.
- Flowers are bright yellow, shiny and obvious, in clusters at branch tips, with five petals.
- Fruit are reddish brown capsules, seeds are cylindrical and black.
- Spread is by seed in sticky capsules, and suckering.
- Native to Europe and Asia, naturalized in most parts of Australia, coastal slopes and tablelands of NSW.
- Danger is greatest when feed is scarce or when the plant is young.
- Lesions only appear in sunny weather.
- Goats are more resistant to this weed.

Picture: *Hypericum perforatum*  
Helen Simmonds. Calga NSW.

**Further Reading:**
- Allan, Holst and Campbell, *Weed Control Using Goats.* MLA and NSW Dept Ag. 1999

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