**Indigofera linnaei**

**Common name:**
Birdsville indigo

**Palatability to Livestock:**
Moderate.

**Toxicity to Goats:**
Not affected.

**Toxicity to Other Species:**
Horses, and subsequently dogs.

**Poisonous Principle:**
Possibly a nitrotoxin.

**Effects:**
*Signs and symptoms;*
. Lethargy,
. Progressive incoordination,
. Loss of appetite.

*Health and Production Problems;*
. Horses become ill and may die.
. Dogs become ill after eating affected meat from poisoned, dead horses, and may die.

*Treatment;*
. Gelatine drench, see Vet.

**Integrated Control Strategy:**
. Use sheep or goats to eat out the plant, before putting horses onto the pasture.
. Supplement feed to horses.

**Comments:**
. A prostrate, sometimes a flat, mat-forming annual or perennial legume, with many thin, hairy stems, growing up to forty cms in length.
. Alternate pinnate leaves made of five to nine grey-green, hairy, oval shaped leaflets in two rows.
. The flowers are small, pea-like, pinkish red and crowded onto short stalks.
. Groups of cylindrical pods up to five cms long and pointed at the tip, containing two seeds.
. One of the first plants to shoot after rain, and may be prevalent around waterholes and other trampled areas.
. Eaten readily and without apparent ill effect by sheep and cattle, this plant is responsible for Birdsville disease in horses.
. This disease can occur following rains which are sufficient for the growth of this plant, but not enough to encourage grass growth.
. Horses lose condition and become dull, lethargic and uncoordinated.
. The rear hooves become worn with constant dragging, and when driven, affected horses may exhibit tight uncoordinated circling spasms, suddenly loose control, collapse and die.
. There is no treatment at the moment.
. Paddocks should be grazed by cattle or sheep before horses are introduced.
. Poisoning mainly in western Queensland, northern SA and NT; winter to early summer.
. Mild cases seem to recover unaided.

**Further Reading:**
. McKenzie. Veterinary Clinical Toxicology. 2000