Symposium on Poisonous Plants

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Introduction

Poisonous plants are one of the principal causes of economic loss to the livestock industry of the world. There is a general tendency to think of poisoning in terms of death. There are, however, many ways in addition to death that poisonous plants exert their detrimental effects on livestock. Some of these additional effects include chronic illness and debilitation, decreased weight gains, abortion, birth defects, and photosensitization. In addition to these more obvious losses, we must include increased costs associated with managing ranges and pastures infested with poisonous plants. Some of these less obvious but important costs include fencing, loss of forage, increased labor costs in herding and moving livestock, and in some cases, supplemental feeding.

A large portion of the earth's land area is devoted to the grazing of livestock. The forage on these lands can best be harvested by grazing animals. Poisonous plants oftentimes interfere with the proper harvesting of this forage. Proper range management is important in the prevention of livestock poisoning by plants.

The purpose of this symposium is to bring together for discussion problems related to livestock poisoning by plants and management methods related to prevention.

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