Herbicide Control of Poisonous Plants

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Poisonous plants are components of most vegetation communities. Many are native, yet some are introduced and have become naturalized. In the past, livestock poisoning by plants was largely attributed to overstocked and overgrazed ranges (Stoddart and Smith 1955). Desirable plants declined and noxious and poisonous plants increased or invaded. Reduced forage supply and excessive numbers of livestock forced animals to consume poisonous plants, which often resulted in catastrophic losses.

Ranges have improved in the last 30 to 50 years (Box and Malechek 1987), yet losses to poisonous plants still occur and cause major economic losses to the livestock industry. Recent estimates of direct loss to poisonous plants from deaths and abortions exceed \$234 million annually on western rangelands and pastures (Nielsen et al. 1988). Other losses such as chronic illness, reduced production and weight loss; as well as indirect losses (increased veterinary and labor costs, supplementation and fencing) may exceed the above stated value of lost animals. Another significant cost is the altered management and inefficient use of range and pasture forages that result from the presence of poisonous plants. The presence of poisonous plants may restrict the time or season of use, the class or species of livestock grazed, and may prevent optimum use of the forage resource.

Unlike infectious diseases, there are essentially no antidotes to prevent poisoning or to revive poisoned animals. Solutions to toxic plant problems depend upon management to prevent livestock from consuming toxic amounts of the plant. Managers must learn to identify poisonous plants on their range, know when they are most toxic to the class of livestock they manage, and then devise management strategies to reduce the risk of poisoning.

However, good management alone may not sufficiently reduce poisoning problems. Infestations of some poisonous plants such as locoweed species (*Astragalus* spp.) may appear when weather conditions are favorable (Ralphs and Bagley 1989). Scattered infestations of poisonous plants such as larkspur (*Delphinium* spp.) may cause persistent problems (Ralphs et al. 1988). Competition and utilization problems caused by plants such as broom snakeweed [Gutierrezia sarothrae (Pursh) Britt. & Rusby] may reduce forage production (Ueckert 1979). Therefore, control practices may be necessary to reduce economic losses. Mechanical control and reseeding to adapted forage species may be necessary when ranges are severely degraded, such as the conversion of halogeton [Halogeton glomeratus (Bieb) C.A. Mey] to crested wheatgrass [Agropyron cristatum (L.) Gaertner] (Cook 1965). Biological control by insects may provide longterm suppression of introduced species if population densities of the specific bio-control agent can be maintained. However, biological control seldom provides a total solution to weed problems. Herbicide control offers the most direct and immediate relief of poisonous plant problems. The proper herbicide will kill or suppress the target plant and thereby eliminate the immediate threat of poisoning. In addition, production of desirable forage may increase if competition from the target plant is reduced.

Herbicides alone seldom provide a long-term solution to poisonous plant problems because of the open niche created after the control of the unwanted species. Seed reserves in the soil will germinate and reestablish the stand and other undesirable species may invade the site. However, herbicides may provide a useful tool in the total management framework to reduce the density of toxic plants to safe levels for livestock

A considerable amount of research for poisonous plant control has been conducted with the small number of herbicides currently registered for use on rangeland. Table 1 lists specific poisonous plants, the herbicides which have been evaluated for their control, rates of application, notes on timing and conditions of treatment, and references to the original research where additional details can be obtained. This table can serve as a reference for land managers and ranchers where herbicidal control of poisonous plants may be desirable.

Several factors must be considered in selection and use of herbicides: efficacy in killing or suppressing the target species; selectivity in controlling the target species without adversely affecting associated vegetation; timing of application and environmental conditions necessary for maximum efficacy of the herbicide; returns or benefits from controlling the weed and eliminating loss or risk of poisoning compared to the cost of treatment; and the response of associated forage. An assessment should be made of the above factors before any treatment program is implemented. If the assessment is positive, then the herbicide label should be followed carefully to ensure safety and to maximize herbicidal efficacy.

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Information in this report regarding use of herbicides was taken from published literature. Mention of chemical names does not constitute endorsement by the authors. All uses of herbicides must be registered by appropriate state and federal agencies. Local authorities should be consulted for use and application of particular herbicides in each state and locality.

HERBICIDES FOR CONTROL OF POISONOUS PLANTS								
Species	Herbicide	Rate Ib ai/ac	Time of Application	Remarks	Authors			
Arrowgrass (Seaside) (Triglochin maritima)	Mutsulfuron ¹	.5 oz/ac	Seed stalk elongation	Use .5% surfactant.	Whitson, 1989			
Bitterweed (Hymenoxys odorata)	2,4-D ²	1	Late autumn to early spring before flowering	Apply when actively growing before flowering temperature above 72° F and soil moist.	Bunting and Wright, 1974 Landers et al., 1981 Sperry and Sultemeier, 1965			
	2,4-D + dicamba	.75 .25						
	2,4-D+ picloram	.5 .12						
	Picloram Tebuthiuron	.5 .5-1	Autumn to spring during any growth stage.	Effective when temperature below 60° F.	D.N. Ueckert, un- published data			
	Metsulfuron	1.25 oz/ac	Late autumn to early winter.	Apply to seedlings ≤ 2 in tall, and actively growing.				
	Clopyralid	.25	Late autumn to spring.	Apply when plants are actively growing.				
Colorado rubberweed Pingue (Hymenoxys richardsonii,	2,4-D	2	Pre-bud stage during active growth.	Retreatment may be necessary.	Johnson, 1962			
Death camas (Zigadenus spp.)	2,4-D	1.5-3	Early spring, 3-5 leaf stage.	Spraying ineffective if treatment delayed	Bohmont, 1952 Hyder and Sneva, 1962			
Goatsrue (Galega officinalis)	2,4-D + Dicamba	1-2 0.5	May to June when plants are 6 to 8 in high.		Evans and Ashcroft, 1982			
Common Goldenweed (Isocoma coronopitolia)	2,4-D + picloram	.8-1.8 .24	Spring.	Apply under favorable growing conditions.	Mayeaux & Crane, 1982			
	Picloram	.5-1	**					
	Triclopyr	.5-1	"					
Rayless goldenrod (Isocoma wrightii)	2,4-D	1	n	Apply under favorable growing conditions.	Sperry 1953, 1967			
	Picloram	1-2	Late summer.	After good rains.	Miller 1971, 1972			
	Dicamba	1-2	"					
	Picloram pellets	.5-1	Summer-autumn.	Prior to rain.	Ueckert et al., 1983			
Greenwood (Sarcobatus vermiculatus)	2,4-D	2	Spring when actively growing.	Use diesel oil carrier (2-3 gal). Treatment for 2 or 3 years may be necessary.	Cluff et al., 1983			
Halogeton (Halogeton glomeratus)	2.4-D	2	Early branching, pre- bloom stage.	Provides 1 year control. Reinfests from seed unless planted to desirable grasses.	Cook and Stoddart, 1953 Cronin, 1965 Morton et al. 1959 Zappettoni, 1953			
Hemlocks Water hemlocks (<i>Cicuta</i> spp.)	2,4-D	2	Bud to early bloom stage.	Remove, livestock after spraying. Plants sometimes become palatable after treatment.	Dewey, 1989			
Poison hemlock (Conium maculatum)	2,4-D + dicamba	2.5 1	Before plants reach bud stage.	May require additional treatment the following year.	USDA, 1988			
Hemp dogbane (Apocynum cannabinum)	Picloram 2,4-D	0.5	When plants are actively growing.	Repeated treatments may be necessary.	Robinson and Jeffery, 1972			

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Larkspur (Delphinium spp.)							
Waxy larkspur (D. glaucescens)	Picloram + 2,4-D	1 2	Before flower stage.	Plants should be actively growing at the time of treatment.	Maki, Lacy and Snoder, 1983		
Tall (<i>D. barbeyi</i>) or Duncecap (<i>D. occiden- tale</i>) larkspur	Glyphosate	2		Apply to individual plants with hand sprayer or wipe-on applicator.	Cronin, 1974 Mickelsen, et al., 1990 Mueggler, 1952 Ralphs et al., 1990 Whitson, 1988		
	Metsulfuron	1 to 2 oz	Vegetative or early bud stage.	Use .5% surfactant.			
	Triclopyr	4		Treat 2 successive years.			
	Picloram	1-2	Vegetative to bloom stage.	May damage associated vegetation at higher rates			
Low larkspur (D. nelsonii)	2,4-D	1.5-3	Fully emerged but befor flowering.	е	Hyder et al., 1956		
Plains larkspur (D. geyeri)	Picloram + 2,4-D	.255 .5	Bud stage		Alley and Lee, 1970		
Locoweed and milkvetch (<i>Oxytropis</i> and <i>Astraga-</i> <i>lus</i> spp.)							
	2,4-D	2	Bud to flower stage.	Plants should be Alley, 1976 actively growing at Bohmont, treatment time. Cronin et., Freebarn a Freeman,	Alley, 1976		
	Dicamba	1			Freebarn and Whitson 1988 Freebarn and Whitson 1988 Freeman, 1980 Freeman et al., 1982 Norris, 1951 Ralphs et al., 1988 Ueckert, 1985 Whitson, 1988 Williams and Ralphs, 1989		
	Clopyralid	.255	11				
	Triclopyr	2	"				
	Metsulfuron	.25 oz	Vegetative stage.	Apply in autumn in the southwest when plants are beginning to grow.			
*	Picloram	.255	"				
	Picloram + triclopyr	.25 .25	Autumn.		,,,,,,,,		
	Clopyralid + triclopyr	.25 .25					
	Picloram + dicamba	.25 .25					
	2,4-D + dicamba	.75 .25	1) 1)				
Lupine (<i>Lupinus</i> spp.)	2,4-D	2	Bud to early bloom.		Bohmont, 1952		
	2,4-D + dicamba	1 .5	"	Mueggler, 1952 Parker, 1959 Ralphs et al., 1987	Nueggler, 1952 Parker, 1959		
	Triclopyr	.5-1.5	п		naipiis et al., 1967		
Milkweed (<i>Asclepias</i> spp.)	2,4-D + picloram	1 .5	Before plants reach full bloom.		Bhowmik, 1982 Cramer and Burnside, 1981		
	Glyphosate	2		Non-selective, apply to individual plants.			
Sand Shinnery Oak (Quercus havardii)	Tebuthiuron	.5-1	Winter.		Pettit, 1979 Jones & Pettit, 1984		
Orange sneezeweed (Helenium hoopesii)	2,4-D	4	Prebloom stage.		Doran, 1951		

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Snakeweed (broom) (Gutierrezia sarothrae)	2,4-D	2	Spring during active growth.	Must be actively growing.	Gesink et al., 1973 Jacoby et al., 1982 Mayeaux and Crane, 1982			
	Picloram	.255		In Northern U.S. apply in early summer in the	McDaniel, 1985 McDaniel & Duncan, 1987			
	Tebuthiuron Mutsulfuron	.5-7.5 .5 oz		vegetative stage. In the Southwest apply in fall to early winter in the post flower stage	Schmutz & Little, 1970 Sosebee et al., 1982ab Sperry and Robinson, 1963 Whitson and Ferrell, 1988			
Spring parsley (Cymopterus watsonii)	2,4-D	2	Bud to early bloom growth.		Williams et al., 1970			
St. Johnswort (Hypericum perforatum)	2,4-D	2-3	Spring during active growth.	Can be suppressed by Klamathweed beetle.	Huffaker and Kennett, 1959			
Tarbush (Flourensia cernua)	Tebuthiuron	.75-1	Winter.		Ueckert, Jacoby and Hartmann, 1982			
Senecio Tansy ragwort <i>(Senecio jacobaea)</i>	2,4-D	1-2	Early bolting stage.	Can be suppressed by Cinebar moth.	Bedell et al., 1984 Whitson et al., 1985			
	Clopyralid Metsulfuron Picloram Dicamba + 2,4-D	.5 1-1.5 oz .255 .25 + .75	Rosette stage. " "					
Threadleaf groundsel (Senecio douglassii var longilobus)	2,4-D Picloram Picloram + 2,4-D	1 1 .25 .75	April-June Autumn "		Jones et al., 1982 Sharrow et al., 1988			
Western braken fern (Pteridium aquilinum)	Dicamba	4-8	Before fronds emerge.					
	Amitrole Ammonium	8 1:1 moler			Cook et al., 1981			
	thiocyanate Asulam	ratio 3-6			Steward et al., 1979			
Western false hellebore (Veratrum californicum)	2,4-D	2	Late spring after last Leaf has expanded.	May require one additional treatment	Williams & Kreps, 1970 Williams & Cronin, 1981			

Metsulfuron is a dry flowable formulation and is expressed as ounces of product per acre. All other herbicides are expressed as pounds active ingredient per

²The low volatile ester (LVE) formulation of 2,4-D is normally preferred for rangeland uses except near cropland or desirable broadleaf species.

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