



Buttercup Flowers



Buttercup flowers, detail



Buttercup leaves, detail

BUTTERCUPS

Driving through any part of the Fraser valley it is easy to see how buttercups have taken over the fields that most horse owners graze their horses on. Although the yellow flowers do make for a more colorful field, buttercups contain an irritant sap that can severely damage the horse's digestive system if consumed in large amounts.

Signs your horse may have ingested the plant may include:

- Blisters on skin and mucus membrane
- Bloody urine
- Weak pulse
- Twitching eye lids
- Loss of appetite
- Seizures
- Colic

There is no known antidote for buttercup poisoning. Buttercups are not the horse's first choice for food and will normally be avoided. The problem is that this avoidance causes buttercups to quickly take over an entire field if ignored.

The best way to prevent this is through pasture management. Mowing down the buttercups in the pasture and applying herbicides, such as **MCPA** at a rate of 35ml per 10L of water in a back pack sprayer are a good way of avoiding a life threatening situation for your horse. This pasture management will also help kill Horsetail, another poisonous weed to horses.

If you do suspect poisoning due to buttercups consult a veterinarian right away to help reduce the damage to the digestive tract.



References:

Western Producer, July 31, 2008. Article by Roy Lewis, DVM.
<http://www.agf.gov.bc.ca/cropprot/weedguid/waterhmlk.htm>