



Weed of The Week

Perilla Mint (*Perilla frutescens*)

This week's weed of the week features a growing problem among livestock and pasture managers across the eastern United States. Kentucky has seen a growing number a livestock illness due to the consumption of the poisonous weed species. Perilla Mint is a summer annual herb like plant that thrives during the late summer season when pastures are slowing down in growth. This weed can be found growing in damp and shady woodland edges or along fence rows or creek bottoms. Perilla Mint produces a large number of seeds and grows in colonies. In most situations livestock will avoid eating Perilla Mint due to its odor, but in over grazed pastures livestock can be tempted to ingest this weed. Perilla Mint contains a toxin call perilla ketone. This toxin is highest when the plant enters the reproductive phase of growth and the seed itself is considered to be the most toxic part of the plant. Symptoms livestock will show after consuming this weed includes a sever pneumonia type effect, including labored breathing, fever, coughing, and if severe enough death. Scouting and controlling this weed is important, but overall good pasture and forage management is the number one way to prevent growth and Perilla mint poisoning. In most case cattle with good body condition scores are not likely to eat Perilla Mint, but cattle with low body condition score or are nutrient deprived are likely to consume and die from consuming. Herbicides such as Grazeon Next HL, Milestone, and Weedmaster has been shown to be effective in controlling Perilla Mint.

