

## What advice can you give about Ragwort?

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Hot, dry weather can result in a shortage of grass leading horses and cattle to feed on whatever weeds are in their fields including ragwort, otherwise known as 'yellow peril'.

There is also a greater risk of animals eating this highly toxic weed towards the end of summer as pastures die out or when it is mistakenly dried in hay.

This tall, yellow-flowering weed causes irreversible damage to the liver, resulting in an extremely painful death for horses and livestock. Animals may lose weight and suffer depression, loss of appetite, constipation, sunburn and jaundice. A small intake over a long period can be just as damaging as a large intake on a single occasion. In many cases, eating ragwort can be fatal to animals.

Ragwort seeds can be dormant in the soil for up to 20 years and as a biennial plant, does not flower until its second year.

Ragwort is registered as injurious under the Weeds Act of 1959; it is the responsibility of landowners to control the weed and an offence to fail to comply with clearance notices.

*Take care!*

*Wear gloves when handling ragwort as it suspected to be harmful to humans too. Pulling up ragwort plants needs to be done before flowering is complete and is more easily done in the spring when the plant is immature. It is important to remove as much of the root as possible. Digging out the entire plant will reduce the possibility of leaving behind root fragments. ☐☐ ☐*