

Ryegrass Staggers. Will It Affect You?

**Propharma Weather Shield reduces the impact of Ryegrass Staggers:
– Rapidly and Cheaply.**



The Facts¹:

- Outbreaks of Ryegrass Staggers occur annually in Southern Victoria and Tasmania.
- Serious outbreaks occurred in 1981, 1986, 1993, 2002 and 2005
- In 2002, an estimated 100,000 sheep and 500 cattle died in Victoria as a result of Ryegrass Staggers.
- High risk seasons are likely where lush spring growth under warm, wet conditions is followed by hot, dry summer.
- Toxins concentrate in the seedhead and crown of the grass.
- Danger Months – December through to May.

¹Source – Meat & livestock Australia 2007

The condition commonly known as “Ryegrass Staggers”, or more accurately as Perennial Ryegrass Toxicosis (PRGT), can be a serious and widespread problem in livestock grazing perennial ryegrass dominant pastures during summer and autumn months. It affects sheep, cattle, horses and alpacas. The most commonly recognised sign of PRGT is ‘staggering’, which may occur within a few days of exposure to infected pastures, hay or silage.

Less obvious signs may include ill-thrift, especially in young stock, heat stress, scouring and dags, reduced fertility and lowered milk production. Deaths also occur from mishaps due to lack of coordination, such as drowning in creeks and dams.

Perennial Ryegrass Toxicosis (PRGT) is caused by two toxins, Ergovaline and Lolitrem B. These toxins are produced by an endophyte fungus that lives in the plant. The fungus is not harmful to the grass, and in fact benefits the plant by enhancing seedling vigor, tillering, seed production and resistance to drought and insect pests. However, the toxins produced by the fungus can cause considerable problems in the livestock grazing infected pastures. Toxin production is usually highest when the rye grass goes to head and during new season growth following summer rains. The toxins are concentrated in the seedhead, stem and crown of the plant, but at lower levels in the leaf.

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Weather Shield Loose Supplements with Toxin Binders – A Tool in Managing the Challenge of Rye Grass Staggers.

Weather Shield Loose Lick Supplements from Propharma Australia are a convenient and effective means of managing some of the challenges associated with PRGT. They provide essential salt and other vital minerals and vitamins that are crucial to maintaining a healthy animal. In the specific case of Ryegrass Staggers, Propharma includes a product that binds to the toxins to help minimise the effects of PRGT.

Propharma's Weather Shield Loose Lick Supplements are weatherproof and have been designed to be fed out in self draining troughs, making it ideal for open grazing situations. They are an ideal way to provide ad-lib minerals and vitamins to cattle, sheep, horses and alpacas. The main benefit is that the animal will only take as much as it needs according to its individual requirements. This ensures that Weather Shield Loose Lick Supplements provide a very efficient and cost effective form of supplementation.

We recommend that you commence using Weather Shield supplements immediately to prevent problems for your stock this season.

Typical consumption rates:

Cattle	100 -150 grams per head per day
Sheep	20 – 30 grams per head per day
Horses	50 – 80 grams per head per day
Alpacas	20 – 30 grams per head per day



These usage rates mean that Weather Shield is a cost effective solution for ongoing stock management.

Written by Dr Geoff Irish, Animal Nutritionist and Manager of Sales and Marketing, Propharma Australia.

For pricing or further information contact:

Propharma Australia Pty. Ltd., Phone (03) 9794 7166,

Email sales@propharma.com.au.

Propharma Australia has been manufacturing and providing services to the stockfeed industry for over 35 years. In addition to Weather Shield Loose Lick Supplements our products and services include:

- Our "PHARMAMIX" range of Vitamin and Mineral premixes for Cattle, Sheep, Swine, Poultry and Horses.
- Electro G – A soluble blend of electrolyte salts and glucose to correct deficiencies in scouring calves, lambs and foals.
- Nutritional advice.
- Custom formulations of feed and premixes.
- Contract manufacturer of specialty premix formulations.

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