TAINTS IN MEAT FROM SHEEP GRAZING PARTHENIUM WEED

G.D. TUDOR[1], ANNE L. FORD[2], T.R. ARMSTRONG[3], and E.K. BROMAGE[1]

[1]Department of Primary Industries
Animal Research Institute
Yeerongpilly Qld 4105.

[2]CSIRO Division of Food Research
Meat Research Laboratory
Cannon Hill Qld 4170.

[3]Department of Lands
The Alan Fletcher Research Station
P.O. Box 36
Sherwood Qld 4075.

Abstract. The occurrence of taints in meat from lambs consuming parthenium weed (*Parthenium hysterophorus*) was investigated in two experiments. In the first experiment, lambs were fed rations containing either air dried parthenium weed or no parthenium weed for four weeks before slaughter. In the second experiment, lambs grazed a parthenium weed infested pasture or weed free grass for 12 weeks, while others grazed the infested pasture followed by grass for 7, 14 or 21 days immediately before slaughter. A laboratory taste panel and a consumer style domestic panel assessed the aroma and flavour of the meat from all treatments.

Although the laboratory taste panel could differentiate between meat from parthenium weed and grass treatments, the difference in aroma and flavour between treatments was small. Removal of the sheep from the parthenium weed infested pasture for at least 14 days prior to slaughter lowered the level of taint in the meat.

Germination tests on faeces and rumen/reticulum contents of sheep fed parthenium weed failed to show any viable seeds, but it is possible that seeds could be spread via the wool or feet.