

SUMMERTIME WEED CONTROL

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It's June and the weather is warm. The first cutting of hay is done and in the barn. Calves are on the ground and breeding season is almost over. It's time to sit back, watch a ballgame or two and relax. But wait. All of a sudden you look up and wonder "where did all these weeds come from?" You may have done a good job controlling buttercup in the spring, but I've got some bad news. There is another set of weeds waiting in the wings to take over your pasture. Here are a few, with the control options for each.

Horsenettle – This weed is sometimes known as bullnettle. It is a perennial weed, so it can come back from rhizomes (underground stems) or germinate from seed. It has spines on the stem and underside of the leaf, making it unpalatable to grazing animals. It has white/light purple flowers, and produces a berry that is green and eventually turns yellow. The berry is about the size of a cherry tomato.

Control- This is a hard to kill weed. Herbicides like 2,4-D and Banvel will only burn the top. Research by Dr. Neil Rhodes has shown that GrazonNext HL is one of the best herbicides available to control horsenettle. Use 1.6 pints per acre any time prior to berry formation and you will see good control.

Spiny Pigweed – This weed is officially spiny amaranth, a warm-season annual weed. It is often found in areas destroyed by winter hay feeding, just inside gates, around water troughs, and other areas with poor stands of grass. It is a prolific seed producer, and seed can germinate every time there is a summer rain. This makes control difficult, since a spray early in the summer may not keep the area weed-free the entire summer.

Control – 2,4-D gives good control of this plant. You can't wait until the plant is 3 foot tall with seed to spray, however. You need to spray when it is 6-8 inches tall. You may also need to make more than one application during the summer, since there can be several crops of germination during the summer.

Ragweed – This is another summer annual weed. It is actually very palatable to cattle, causing it be readily grazed. However, left uncontrolled it can become a very troublesome weed in just a few years. Similar to spiny pigweed, it is easy to control, if it is sprayed when small.

Control – 2,4-D will give fantastic control of ragweed. Timeliness of application is key – 6-8 inches tall is the best time to spray.

Anytime you get ready to use a herbicide during the summer, make sure to be aware of any sensitive plants in the area. You don't want to kill your garden, or your neighbor's crop, due to spray drift. Contact your local Extension office for more info on herbicide application. Go to UTBeef.com for more help on weed ID.