

Lolitre B intoxication (perennial rye grass staggers)

Perennial ryegrass can become infected with an endophytic fungus which produces tremorgenic compounds , the most important of which is Lolitre B.

Clinical Signs

Ingestion of these compounds results in neuromuscular dysfunction ranging from fine tremors to ataxia and tetany which are exacerbated by stress or exercise. Animals can appear to be normal while grazing, only to fall over if suddenly frightened.

Signs can be seen in any species which graze affected pastures including cattle, sheep, horses, deer and alpaca.

Ryegrass staggers is usually seen during summer and autumn with animals developing signs 1-2 weeks after going onto an infected pasture.

Treatment

There is no treatment for ryegrass staggers. Spontaneous recovery usually occurs over 2 to 5 days provided that the animal is removed from the infected pasture.

Diagnosis

Clinical signs and history are often sufficient to make a diagnosis.

Lolitre B concentrations can be assessed in urine, serum and feed. It is a referred test with a turn-around-time of up to 1 week.

