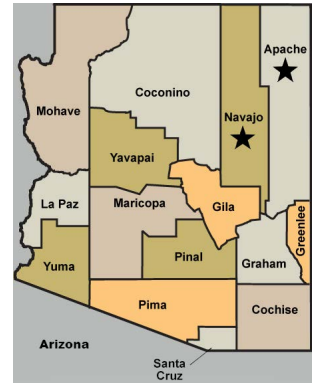# Toxic Plant: Puncture Vine (Goats head)

Location: Northeastern/Eastern Arizona

Description: A low growing annual that grows mainly in disturbed areas and sandy soils. It also occurs heavily in overgrazed pastures. Leaves grow opposite of each other and are pinnately compound. Flowers are very small, yellow and have five petals. The seed has two very sharp spikes that resembles a goat head.

Affected Livestock: All classes of livestock are affected by both the seed and grazing the plant. The plant contains saponins which may contribute to animal bloat. The wilted plant is the most toxic. Additionally, the plant can carry fungal toxins which can cause skin damage (photosensitivity) from sunlight to affected livestock. Sheep can experience swelling of the head from the photosensitivity. Lameness and/or infection can also occur in the feet or mouth from the seed if it is embedded in the skin of the animal. May cause liver damage in sheep and goats.

Symptoms (can vary): Blindnesss, peeling skin, swelling of the head area (sheep), loss of lips and ears, nitrate poisoning symptoms, mortality of young animals, jaundice, limping, and inability to eat or graze (from impacted seeds).

Treatment: Remove animals from problem grazing area. Provide shade, fresh water and quality hay. See veterinarian immediately if poisoning or liver damage is suspected. Anti-inflammatory and anti-histamines may help with photosensitivity burns. Adapt new grazing strategies for more palatable plants. Broadleaf herbicides, except 2,4 -D can control this plant.

Photos courtesy of UC Master Gardeners of Butte County

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