

Ethno-Veterinary Practices: A Novel Holistic Approach for Optimizing Animal Health and Production

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Animal industry provides a major source of employment generation and livelihood security for many people worldwide, particularly the rural poor and tribes in developing countries. Ethno-Veterinary medicine is a very unique and holistic interdisciplinary approach of the local knowledge about the importance & utilities of different parts of plants with animal health care and husbandry practices for optimizing animal growth, productive & reproduction. Herbal medicines serve as safer alternatives as growth promoters due to their suitability and preference, lower cost of production, easy to grow and cultivate, improved feed efficiency, fast growth and reduced mortality in dairy cattle. The Indian subcontinent has rich in terms of ethno-veterinary health traditions. Herbal medicinal plants are being used for the treatment of various human and livestock ailments by the local peoples since earliest times. It is a recognized fact that several herbs, shrubs and plants are an important source of ethno-veterinary medicines. Such practices are more common in almost all developing and developed countries especially in India, China, Pakistan, Nepal, USSR, USA, Bhutan and Bangladesh etc. The various components of several herbs, shrubs and plants are used as medicines for treatment of many types of human and animal's diseases.

Herbal medicines comprise plant-based medicines can be used for therapeutic, prophylactic or diagnostic application in animal health care and disease prevention. Ethno-veterinary knowledge is acquired through practical experience and has traditionally been passed down orally from generation to generation. Various central and state Universities viz. Central Drug Research Institute (Lucknow), Anand Agricultural University (Gujarat), National Dairy Development Board (NDDB) and SABAR Dairy union of Gujarat state extensively propagate the ethno-veterinary concept by providing field training and motivating personnel involved in animal husbandry.

The excessive, exhaustive and indiscriminate use of higher antibiotics for treatment of various diseases with steroidal and anti-inflammatory drugs leads to a lot of side defects along with their residual effect in the milk, meat and other animal products and byproduct as well as there may be development of antibiotic resistance. Health hazards issues will be created by use of hard and prolong antibiotic treatments. Hence, for treating the animal diseases ethno-veterinary medicine, homeopathic and ayurvedic treatment is now safer and better alternatives for human and animal health concerned. Hence, there is a great need to start the awareness programme about the collection, dispersal of traditional knowledge and compilation of facts about the ethno-veterinary practices by the villagers of not only India, abroad also. Government of India should also taken necessary initiatives to promote the ethno-veterinary practices and starts a course curriculum by implementation of degree or diploma course to enrich the knowledge and conduction of research about the ethno-veterinary practices along with homeopathic and ayurvedic treatments for promoting animal health and production and reproduction performance of animals.

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