



Herbal Medicine for Treating Livestock Ailments

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Even with the escalated usage of allopathy, traditional medicines or herbs or remedies are still being utilized as an essential practice for the treatment of several diseases especially in developing countries and also for some livestock diseases, farmers use these herbal medicines. Large abundance of herbal resources with easy access and negligible cost value make them one of the most suitable candidates against cattle ailments.

Introduction

Herbal medicines have been a part and parcel of human-life. As a combinational approach or even singly, plants like *Curcuma longa*, *Vitex negundo*, *Zingibar officinale*, *Justicia adhatoda*, *Zingibar officinale*, *Azadirachta indica*, *Bambusa arundinacea* have been the most popular ones against livestock diseases. Even in various studies, it is reported that against 20 ailments, 38 plant spp. are being commonly used, where the highest usage was observed of *Curcuma longa* (30%), followed by *Azadirachta indica* (21%). These remedied are being used most commonly against foot and mouth disease (FMD), followed by diarrhea and horn avulsion. Since rural places have lacking modernized health systems, therefore, traditional approach is the most important tool for them to treat their cattle and themselves.

Preponderance of livestock-ailments

Most commonly treated ailments of cattle are foot and mouth diseases (FMD), anorexia, delayed puberty, diarrhea, horn avulsion, tick bites, flu etc. and these are globally treated by various communities. The mostly used plants formulations are as paste, raw or powdered belonging to different families on their usage frequency basis as: Zingiberaceae and Meliaceae, then Lamiaceae and Poaceae, followed by Acanthaceae, Anacardiaceae, Cucurbitaceae, Euphorbiaceae, Fabaceae, Moraceae, Musaceae, Piperaceae and Solanaceae [Fig.1]. The most formulations are administered orally then externally.

Commonly used plants

The important ethno-veterinary medicinal plants, namely *Azadirachta indica*, *Datura metel*, *Abrus precatorius*, rhizome of *Curcuma longa* and *Zingiber officinale*, *Justicia adhatoda*, *Piper beetle*, *Vitex negundo*, *Allium sativum*, fruits of *Citrus limon*, fresh flowers of *Musa paradisiaca*, *Carica papaya*, *Citrullus colocynthis*, *Lansea coromandelica*, *Leucas aspera*, *Morinda citrifolia*, *Ocimum sanctum*, *Phyllanthus amarus*, *Psidium guajava* etc. These plant species are known to have anti-microbial, anti-cancer, anti-diabetic, anti-fertility, anti-inflammatory, anti-oxidant, anti-arthritis and antibiotic activities. The most popular method of preparation of herbal medicines is paste (matrix used: water or honey), powder, liquid and raw form. Paste can be easily prepared by pestle and mortar.

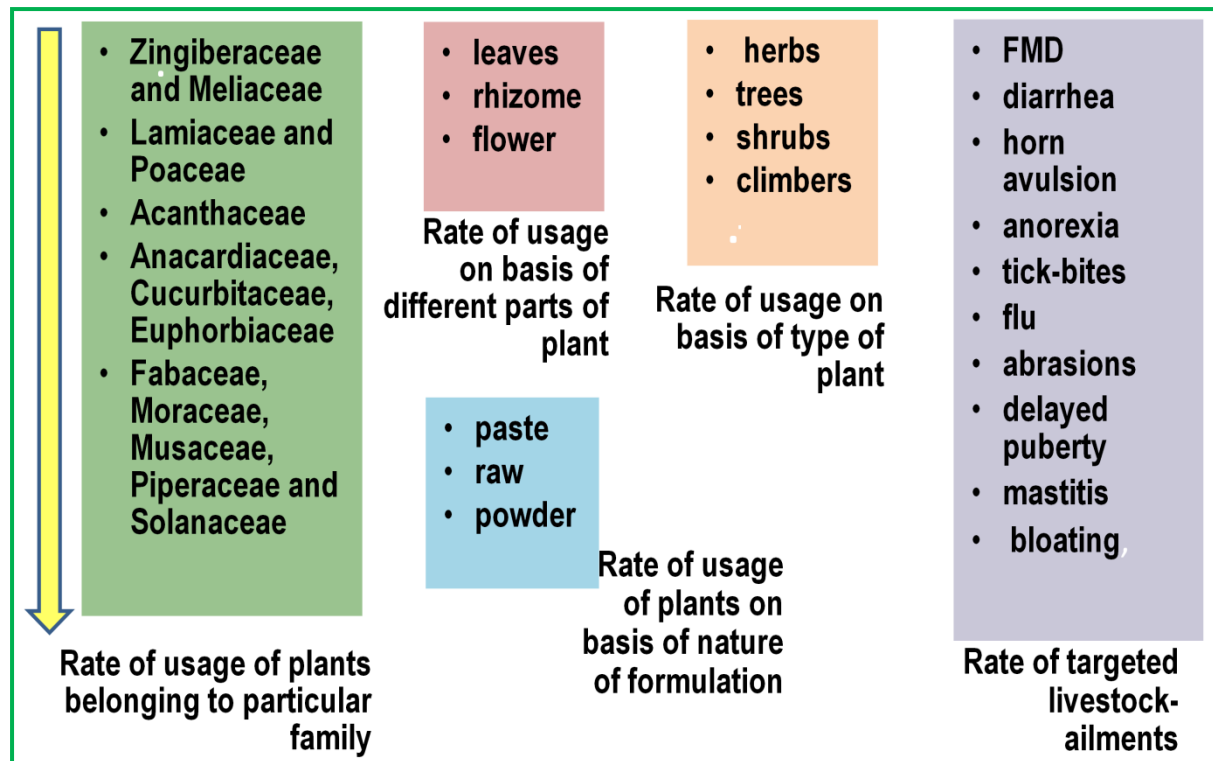


Fig. 1- Prevalence of the most targeted livestock-ailments with the frequently used plants

Advantages of using plants

Easy access to herbal resources, limited side effects, free or low cost of traditional herbal medicine and lack of modern healthcare facilities in the rural areas are viewed as the reasons for herbal treatment being continued as a viable practice. These traditional healing practices eventually evolved as ethno-veterinary practices.

Future prospective

This traditional knowledge on the plants possess great potential for research and also for the discovery of new drugs to cure animal ailments.

Reference

1. Jayakumar S, Baskaran N, Arumugam R, Sathiskumar S, Pugazhenth M. (2018). Herbal medicine as a live practice for treating livestock ailments by indigenous people: A case study from the Konar community of Tamil Nadu. *South African Journal of Botany*. 118:23-32.