

Chapter 1

Introduction



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1.1 Introduction

It is well documented that plant-derived secondary metabolites have been attracting the interest of researchers globally as alternative or complementary medications to synthetic agents. Research in the field of ethnoveterinary medicine is relatively neglected in comparison with research on traditional remedies for human ailments, but increasing attention is being focused on this aspect. In light of this, Chap. 2 discusses different natural products with pharmacological properties against animal diseases in addition to the effect of dietary plant natural products on animal performance. Chapter 2 indicates the promising pharmacological properties of plant-derived natural products against animal inflammatory diseases, bacterial and fungal infections as well as parasitic and viral diseases. Importantly, the authors in Chap. 3 report on 275 plant species used in different countries of the world to manage infectious ailments in animals. These medicinal plants have been used in parts of Africa such as South Africa and Uganda, as well as in other countries such as India, Pakistan, Nepal, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Brazil and Iran.

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Chapter 4 describes medicinal plants used for horses in British Columbia, Canada and Trinidad and Tobago. Different plants used to treat many horse diseases such as muscle soreness and tendon problems, injuries, coughs, colds and nosebleeds in addition to plants used as tonics are listed. Regarding the situation in Canada, products from two websites (Riva's Remedies and Greenhawk) have been used for horses in addition to ancient remedies, such as honey and cobwebs for wounds.

Chapter 5 discusses the potential of ethnoveterinary medicines for controlling parasites in goats. The authors report on plants used for both gastrointestinal parasitism and external parasitism. Conventional methods of controlling parasites and plant-derived ethnoveterinary medicaments for controlling parasites are mentioned. Additionally, indigenous plants known to have anthelmintic and acaricidal activities in South Africa are listed. In Chap. 6 ethnoveterinary practices for control of ticks in Africa are discussed extensively. The authors document information on the anti-tick ethnoveterinary practices in different parts of Africa, such as southern, East, West, Central and North Africa. Ethnoveterinary plants used against ticks in these regions are listed.

From general areas of interest in ethnoveterinary medicine, the focus of the book shifts to significant sociological issues in the second section. The authors of Chap. 7 introduce gender aspects and multiple contexts in ethnoveterinary practice and science. The cultural and ethical context of ethnoveterinary scientists and practices are considered. One of the authors (TvA) co-founded the Institute for Ethnobotany and Zoopharmacognosy (IEZ) in the Netherlands in 1995 as a private knowledge centre at a stage when there was no interest in phytotherapy research topics at universities in the Netherlands. The chapter as a whole illustrates how researchers at the IEZ work with animals and on environmental issues and how their work can contribute to Feminist Animal Studies (FAS) and Feminist Environmental Studies. It is significant in that it opens the door for new interdisciplinary collaborations, which are vital if we are to understand more about the traditions, cultures and other aspects of ethnoveterinary medicine.

The author of Chap. 8 writes from extensive experience in conducting field work in Africa and discusses difficulties in implementing practical applications of ethnoveterinary medicine in the continent. A holistic approach to medical matters and practical inputs deriving from functional interactions between traditional and Western medicine are recommended.

The third section of the book moves on to investigate in more detail ethnoveterinary medicine in various regions of the world. In Chap. 9 the authors review the use of traditional remedies for the treatment of livestock diseases in Cameroon, citing 138 plant species belonging to 110 genera and 69 families. Chapter 10 provides a summary of plants used in South African ethnoveterinary medicine. Further focus is placed on the ethnoveterinary plants as well as practices used more specifically in the control of ticks and tick-borne diseases in South Africa in Chap. 11. Traditional tick control methods in addition to the use of medicinal plants in South Africa are mentioned in this chapter. A Zimbabwean perspective of ethnoveterinary medicine is provided in Chap. 12, where interesting applications of complementary medicine and ethnoveterinary interventions in poultry care are reported. The authors also

discuss ethnoveterinary practices in cattle and goats, as well as pharmacological activity of ethnomedicinal plants. Moving further north in Africa, Chap. 13 comprises a review of ethnoveterinary medicine in the Maghreb, a fascinating area of the world. Various types of practices including preventive and curative methods are documented, as are numerous plant species commonly used in Maghreb ethnoveterinary medicine.

Crossing to other parts of the world, natural remedies for animal health in Latin America are documented in Chap. 14. The authors report 364 plant species and 61 animal species used to treat diseases of livestock and herds in Latin America. Local practices of cattle raising and ethnoveterinary medicine in Estonia are reviewed in Chap. 15. This is the first report to provide a more thorough overview of the islands Saaremaa and Muhumaa in Estonia. The authors discuss the historic ethnoveterinary medicine, different herbs, mushrooms and mosses used against cattle illnesses in addition to non-herbal treatments in the area. Chapter 16 provides an enlightening discourse on the practices and methods used by Belarusian peasants to manage livestock diseases and preserve their health along with folk concepts and beliefs. In this chapter, charm-healing and Belarusian ethnoveterinary charms are documented, and plant and non-plant remedies used to treat livestock are mentioned. The use of plants for animal health care in the Spanish inventory of traditional knowledge is discussed in Chap. 17. The authors report on different remedies traditionally used in the treatment and prevention of many diseases of domestic animals, in addition to the importance of several plants used as fodder for livestock.

1.2 Conclusion

In providing chapters of general interest as well as those focusing on ethnoveterinary medicine in certain parts of the world in this book, it is hoped that the study of ethnoveterinary medicine will increase in prominence, involving multidisciplinary teams of researchers. It is clear that there is much work still to be done in this field and many lessons to be learned from all parts of the world.