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Book Review

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Review of Ethnoveterinary Botanical Medicine: Herbal Medicines for Animal Health

Ethnoveterinary Botanical Medicine: Herbal Medicines for Animal Health. Edited by D. Katerere and D. Luseba. CRC Press: Boca Raton. 2010. xv + 434 pp. 16 × 24 cm. $139.95. ISBN: 978-1-4200-4560-4.

Medicinal plants have a long history of use in the treatment of both human and animal diseases. Although, over the last 20 years, we have seen a significant rise in the use of herbal medicines for human use, research into the efficacy and safety of herbal medicinal plants for veterinary medicine has been limited. However, a significant amount of animal research supports preclinical investigation leading to products for human use. In this edited book, a multidisciplinary approach to the use of herbal medicines for companion and domestic animals is presented. The editors have pulled together information spanning the globe, and, in particular, there are examples of uses of botanical medicines for animals taken from China, Southeast Asia, parts of Africa, and North and South America.

There are 17 chapters (and an index) written by veterinary clinicians, animal scientists, chemists, and ethnobotanists. In the Foreward by the eminent ethno-pharmacologist Professor Peter Houghton, he states, "this book may be a first to bring together information about ethnoveterinary medicines from a wide range of countries." The first four chapters provide general information on evaluating efficacy, phytochemical methods, and preclinical safety testing. These methods will appear similar to approaches taken in pharmaceutical and human botanical medicine research. Chapter 1 discusses the methods for evaluating efficacy of herbal medicinal products for use in livestock and companion animals. Chapter 2 touches upon issues related to biodiversity, bioprospecting, and benefit sharing, with a discussion of the legal and logistical considerations between states with rich biodiversity (developing countries) and states with advanced technologies (industrialized countries). Chapter 3 discusses the phytochemical methods used to isolate and purify the metabolites from medicinal plants. Chapter 4 discusses various aspects of preclinical safety testing, including toxicity testing and determination of appropriate withdrawal periods for production animals. In Chapters 5−16, the editors compiled detailed information regarding ethnoveterinary medicine from Africa, China, Europe, and North and South America. Each of these chapters is devoted to the use of ethnoveterinary medicine in a select region of the world. In particular, the chapter on the Inventory of Traditional Veterinary Botanicals from around the World by Iqbal and Jabbar is noteworthy in the level of detail provided.

Chapter 17 discusses phytotherapies commonly used to treat companion animals and describes herbal medicines for pet and companion animals. Herbs are presented that are used for specific disease states, e.g., ticks, skin diseases, and intestinal worms.

In general the layout, tables, and graphs are clear. There are many examples of the flowering plants that are used; however, they would have been greatly enhanced had they been published in color. In an otherwise well written and informative book on a newly emerging field, it is unfortunate that there is no chapter covering regulatory issues.

One of us (K.W.) is a nutritionist with nearly 20 years of experience in companion animal nutrition, but little to no experience with botanicals; this book provides convincing evidence and background for the use of botanicals for both livestock and companion animals.

Raymond Cooper
PhytoScience LLC
St Peters, Missouri
Karen Wedekind
Novus International Inc.
St. Charles, Missouri

AUTHOR INFORMATION

Notes

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