Natural Livestock Farming

Strategic international collaboration to reduce the use of antibiotics in dairy farming

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New paradigm

Antibiotic use for common cattle diseases such as mastitis and diarrhea in calves is widespread both in smallholder and large scale dairy farming. This poses a high global risk of resistance against antibiotics. From 2014 to date exchange the strategic collaboration organized by Natural Livestock Farming Foundation (NLF) has strengthened practices that include the use of herbs amongst farmers and veterinarians in India, the Netherlands, Ethiopia and Uganda. This has resulted in a new paradigm in dairy farming, based on the holistic NLF 5-layer approach to effectively reduce the use of antibiotics and other chemical drugs.

Approach

The collaboration between experts in the field of herbal medicine between India, Ethiopia and the Netherlands has given positive results in reducing the use of antibiotics in these countries. In India, the interest of Dutch dairy experts in Indian herbal medicine has helped to boost acceptance amongst smallholder farmers, milk unions and National Dairy Development Board (NDDB). To the extent that in 2022 it is adopted withing the formal dairy strategy of the Indian Government. In Ethiopia and the Netherlands, the encounter with Indian herbal expertise has opened the eyes of the farmers and veterinarians in the sector to this relatively unexplored opportunity to improve cattle health and reduce the use of antibiotics in both smallholder and large scale dairy farming.

Results

Since 1998 the Trans Disciplinary University (TDU) and GLOHMSIWA have documented, assessed and promoted herbal formulations for the most important cattle diseases, including mastitis, calf diarrhea, repeat breeding, bloat and Foot & Mouth Disease (FMD). Over 3000 vets and over 35,000 farmers from 30 milk Unions (dairy processors) in 14 states were trained to use these ethno-veterinary practices (EVP) for preventive and curative purposes. This has proven highly effective. An intervention-impact study in 2019 supported by Ministry of Science and Technology demonstrated 88% reduction of antibiotic residues in milk. The National Dairy Development Board (NDDB) has presented a cure rate of 82% of various cattle ailments through use of herbal products, as well as a 72% reduction of cattle health care costs.

Conclusion / Significance

The Natural Livestock Farming approach, including the use of herbs and herbal medicine, has proven efficacy in reducing the use of antibiotics in both smallholder and large scale dairy farming. It can confidently be upscaled to other countries.

Links/references

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2. https://glohmsiwa.in
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