

Alternative medicinal plans for livestock healthcare in the Western Pacific

Allan C. Sabaldica

Northern Marianas College, USA

Western medicines are unavailable in most Pacific islands and their supply is erratic. Imported drugs are expensive. Many producers either under dose to save money, or overdose because they do not understand the instructions for use. The shortage of animal health experts, food safety concerns, particularly antibiotic and chemical residues in livestock produced, the language variations, the cultural differences, the geographical locations, and the loss in indigenous knowledge of medicinal plants of most Western Pacific extension professionals and producers have stimulated interest in alternative methods of promoting livestock health.

The Agriculture Development in the American Pacific (ADAP, 1996) and USDA Hatch, (2009) sponsored a project that provided basal reference for animal health status in the CNMI and in the Micronesia. This study establishes baseline information of the common diseases encountered by local producers on their livestock. In 2010, The Western Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (Western SARE, 2010) funded a project providing an alternative medicine for Pacific livestock diseases. The list of livestock diseases identified in the 1996 and 2009 studies were used as a reference to identify potential medicinal plants that will provide alternative cure or solutions in the Western Pacific Animal health list of diseases. The information gathered through this project was through field research and of participatory workshops that brought together the academe, government and non-government officials, extension personnel and the communities. Medicinal plants identified in this project not only created awareness and better understanding to paravets and ranchers but also to the community. It also shows the significance of available natural resources that has been neglected for so many years. The project provided directions and demonstrations for herbal applications to livestock that can serve as low-cost remedy and practical alternatives for animal diseases throughout the Pacific.

The study well emphasized that the compilation of herbal plants with potential medicinal applications for livestock in the Western Pacific does not convey total replacements for commercially available medicine. Further research testing about its pharmacology and drug efficacy must be done first before reaching a therapeutic claims for each herbal plant indications.

Biography

Sabaldica completed his Doctor of Veterinary Medicine (DVM) from the University of the Philippines Los Banos (UPLB) in 1996. He is currently pursuing postgraduate course in Livestock Health and Production at the University of London- Royal Veterinary College and a second post graduate course in Veterinary Public Health at the University of Sydney, Australia. He is currently the Animal Scientist of the Northern Marianas College-Cooperative Research Extension and Education Service (NMC-CREES) and plays the Northern Mariana Islands State Coordinator for the Western Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (Western SARE) professional development program.

allans@nmcnet.edu