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Can traditionally administered home remedies be recommended? An assessment of 287 herbal home remedies for cattle, sheep, goats, pigs and horses, collected in the Swiss Canton of Graubuenden

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Kongressbeitrag

Introduction: In Switzerland, the administration of medicinal plants to livestock is almost completely confined to the use of home remedies. To save this traditional knowledge, which has been handed down through word of mouth, a project aims to collect this information from different regions of Switzerland. Grison home remedies have been evaluated to decide whether or not they can be recommended.

Methods: 32 current or former Grison livestock keepers (average age 59 years) provided information on the home remedies they use or have used to maintain the health of their cattle, sheep, goats, pigs and horses and to treat them. The data collection was conducted by interview (28 on-site, 3 by phone, 1 in writing) with a standardised questionnaire about collecting medicinal plants, and preparing and administrating home remedies for farm animals. Only home remedies containing plants, lichens or products deriving from them were assessed by a practising veterinarian and a pharmacist.



Results: Grison livestock keepers mentioned 407 home remedies. The assessment included 287 herbal home remedies with 346 different indications. The investigations resulted in classification into 3 categories: (1) 278 indications that can be recommended, provided, in some cases, changes were made to either their preparation or administration. (2) 17 indications that could not be assessed and (3) 51 indications where their use is not recommended at all. Overall, 122 different, mainly herbal ingredients were used in the home remedies assessed. The most frequently applied herbal drugs are shown in the table, including their legal status for use in food-producing animals and the results of the assessment.

Discussion/Conclusion: To enable livestock keepers to gain access to traditional knowledge, experts need to make recommendations for appropriate preparation and application of home remedies, to provide advice on necessary precautions and information on the legal situation for use on farm animals.