



## Herbal medication for treating bloat in animals

**Yashodaben Shriram Chaudhari, Yashwantbhai Gauli and Sudhakarbai Gauli**

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Bloat is the buildup of gas in the rumen of cattle. It is produced as a part of the normal digestive process and is released by belching. However, it may become discomfoting and sometimes life threatening for animals. Yashodaben (42), Yashwantbhai (61) and Sudhakarbai (50) hare traditional herbal healers who administer herbal medicines for bloat.

Yashodaben Shriram Chaudhari studied till class tenth and got married at the age of seventeen. Earlier she had to move around in Gujarat with her husband, in connection with work. However, now her husband practices greenhouse cultivation. He also provides his services in the implementation of various government-funded social schemes where Yashodben also joins. She has also been the *Sarpanch* or village-head. Their family has also been engaged in poultry and animal husbandry. In the best possible way, they look after their domestic animals and try to ensure that they are well-fed and remain free from all ailments. Yashodaben

learnt many herbal practices from her parents including one for treating bloat in animals.

Vanki is a small tribal village, where Sudhakarbai (50), a traditional herbal healer lives with his family of six. He has very good knowledge of therapies for various livestock ailments and is helped by his wife in preparing various herbal formulations. Other members in his family include his eldest son who works as a wireman, younger one who looks after their 11 acres of ancestral land in Maharashtra, his youngest son looks after farming in Vanki itself and his daughter who is married. He has around six acres of land where he cultivates Nagli, Paddy, Pigeon pea and groundnut. He also has some cattle head to take care of. He is quite famous for his herbal treatments in the area and is easily approachable. He even has visitors from nearby Surat district.

His family traditionally has been involved in administering herbal medicines for curing various livestock ailments and he learnt the same through the elders. Realising the importance of this knowledge he made extra efforts to imbibe the maximum from his elders. Sudhakarbhai gives herbal medicines for poultry ailments, bloat in animals and diabetes in human.

Yashwantbhai Gouli is a friend of Sudhakarbhai and visits him quite often. He greatly admires the work of Kauchabhai (Sudhakarbhai's father) and keenly observes him. To learn more about various herbs and their uses, he often volunteers to help in the preparation of formulations. With time, he has been able to grasp much and establish himself as a herbal healer as well.

In Vanki, Sudhakarbhai and Yashwantbhai are widely acclaimed as experts in ailments related to human beings, animals and poultry. They make the herbal formulations at home, to administer them to the patients who visit them as and when required.

#### The problem

Ruminants have an active population of micro-organisms in their fore stomach, which help in digestion especially of fibers. During the process of digestion, these micro-organisms produce large

quantities of gas, which must be expelled. This happens through belching. Bloat occurs when this mechanism gets inhibited somehow resulting in the increase in the rate of production of gas than the rate of gas expulsion. These three herbal healers from a backward district of Gujarat have developed herbal formulations for treating bloat in animals. An elaborate search of literature did not yield any reference of the usage of the said local herb to treat bloat.