

National Third - Veterinary

Herbal medication for curing mastitis

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Scout: SRISTI

Becharbhai (62) is a farmer and native of the village Hadida in Amreli district. He has been a herbal practitioner and has developed a useful cure for mastitis, a common problem in cattle.

He studied up to class fourth and thereafter started helping his father in agricultural activities. Presently, he has nine acres of agricultural land and some cattle head. All his nine children are married and settled. Becharbhai is soft-spoken and a generous person. He likes animals and spends time with them. He suggests everyone to take good care of their animals as they cannot communicate their feelings like humans do. He also has interest in herbal medications and keeps experimenting.

Many years back, he saw one of his cows feeling restless and uneasy. While milking her he observed swelling of the udder and a watery discharge instead of milk. He discussed with other villagers and came to know that it was a common condition affecting many animals in the village but they did not have any solution. He carefully observed and realized that one of the reasons for the infection may have been the unhygienic conditions in which the cattle are kept. Further he started experimenting with various herbs and tried to develop a lotion/ ointment, which can help control the infection. With some observation based trial and error, he was able to make an herbal paste, which could treat the condition. He then also gave the medicine to others who needed it.

While he was experimenting with different herbs fellow villagers made a lot of fun of him. His family and a friend Manjibhai supported him as he was trying something, which would not only help him but all others as well. Becharbhai's experimentation has not stopped and he keeps on looking for herbal solutions for various ailments.

Mastitis is an inflammation caused by bacterial infection in the udder, which results in an increase in blood proteins and white blood cells in the mammary tissue. This also results in loss of milk output and damage to tissue. The disease may become fatal if the infection spreads to the blood and when medication gets much delayed. Becharbhai uses the paste of the leaves of a local plant along with moist black soil and salt. This is applied topically over the udder twice daily until the condition improves. The medication generally shows its positive effect in a couple of days but if the condition is severe then it might take about a week to get completely cured.

The herbal formulation was tested for its efficacy at the College of Veterinary Science, Jammu, Jammu and Kashmir. The results revealed significant positive effects of the medication in the infected animals *viz.* decrease in somatic cell count, change of milk colour and consistency, normalization of the inflammation. Further, it was also tested on farm animals in the villages of Gandhinagar, Gujarat and found to be effective.