

National Third - Veterinary

Herbal medication for curing bloat in animals

Sukhdev Rai and Kailash Mistry (Community Representatives)
Sitamarhi and Paschim Champaran, Bihar

Scout: Direct

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 discomforting and sometimes life threatening for animals. Sukhdev Rai and Kailash Mistry administer herbal medicines for treating bloat in animals.

Background

Sukhdev Rai (70) is a poor farmer. His struggles in life started with the death of his father when he was ten years old and have continued till date. In order to supplement his income he also rears cattle. His sons work in cities as daily wagers while his wife helps him in agriculture and cattle rearing. The only resource he is rich in is knowledge, Sukhdev mentions, crediting his guru from a nearby district for the same. He is a well-known herbal healer and people from nearby areas also come to him for medicine and advice. He believes that what he has learned in life should be passed on to the next generation hence he has trained three persons who administer herbal medications in different regions. The only condition stipulated by Sukhdev was they would only use the knowledge in the service of humanity and not for commercial gains.

Fourth child among six siblings, Kailash Mistry (50) was born in a goldsmith family. His father had a small jewelry shop where he also learned some ornamental work. He studied only up to the 7th standard and thereafter left studies to support the family financially. However, machines were where his heart was and not ornaments. His father was supportive and asked him to pursue the work he liked. He became a mechanic and currently works in a motorcycle workshop. He has his wife, four sons and two daughters in his family. His wife takes care of the household chores while he struggles to make ends meet. Kailash had a goat few years back, which fell sick one day with an enlarged stomach. He recalled a treatment suggested by one of his acquaintance earlier and tried it. The medication worked well and his goat got relieved. He shared his experience with others also.

Bloat is a medical condition in which the stomach becomes overstretched by excessive gas content. This gas is generated as a result of the anaerobic microbial fermentation processes taking place in the rumen (front part of the stomach in ruminants). It is a serious medical condition and results in severe pain, mortality if not treated properly. Both the knowledge holders use the leaves of a local plant (name withheld due to IP reasons) to prepare the herbal medication. It is administered orally twice a day for two to three days by which the animal is expected to get cured.

The testing of the herbal formulations was facilitated by NIF at the Department of Clinical Veterinary Medicine, Nagpur Veterinary College, MAFSU, Nagpur. The results showed significant positive effects of the medicine, *viz.* decrease in abdominal girth and improved motility of rumen. NIF filed a patent in the name of the herbal healers and is now trying to identify channels for the diffusion of the medication.