

Benefits and Role of Homeopathic Medicines in Animal's Health & Veterinary Field : A Review article

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Abstract

The use of Homoeopathic medicines in veterinary practice has gained increasing attention as an alternative and complementary approach to animal health care. Rising concerns over antibiotic resistance, drug residues in animal products, and the need for sustainable livestock management have highlighted the importance of residue-free and eco-friendly therapies. Homeopathy, based on the principle of "like cures like," offers a holistic, safe, and cost-effective method of treatment applicable to a wide range of species, including dairy animals, poultry, companion animals, and equines. Its benefits include improved immunity, disease prevention, stress reduction, and management of chronic and infectious conditions without toxic side effects. Evidence from clinical studies and field trials suggests that homeopathy can reduce antibiotic dependency while supporting organic and sustainable farming systems. Despite challenges such as limited scientific validation and variability in treatment outcomes, homeopathic veterinary medicine holds promising potential for enhancing animal welfare, ensuring food safety, and promoting environmentally sustainable livestock production.

Keywords: Homoeopathy, Veterinary medicine, Animal health, Antibiotic resistance, Organic farming, Sustainable livestock, Animal husbandry , Holistic approach

Introduction

Homoeopathy is widely used in livestock, especially in order to reduce the use of antibiotics, although it is often seen as controversial. Homoeopathic medicinal products of biological origin are diverse in nature. The preparations include materials from a wide range of species, from humans to bacterial and viral agents and from healthy as well as from pathological sources. The large spectrum of substances implies that the quality and safety of homoeopathic medicinal products should be considered on a case-by-case basis taking into account the individual character of each product and its intended use.

Homoeopathy or homoeopathy is a pseudoscientific system of alternative medicine. It was conceived in 1796 by the German physician **Samuel Hahnemann**. Its practitioners, called homoeopaths, believe that a substance that causes symptoms of a disease in healthy people would cure similar symptoms in sick people; this doctrine is called *similia similibus curentur*, or "like cures like". Homoeopathic preparations are termed remedies and are made using homoeopathic dilution. In this process, the selected substance is repeatedly diluted until the final product is chemically indistinguishable from the diluent. Often not even a single molecule of the original substance can be expected to remain

in the product. Between each dilution homoeopaths may hit and/or shake the product, claiming this makes the diluent remember the original substance after its removal. Practitioners claim that such preparations, upon oral intake, can treat or cure disease.

Homoeopathy, and also anthroposophic medicine, assumes this sort of higher-ranked and forming principle in nature. The pharmaceutical processes used in these forms of complementary medicine, are aimed at releasing these forming or in-forming principles from matter which is set in time and space. In this way these matter less forming forces can be used as medication. From this point of view it is also conceivable that there are medications in which no material molecules remain.

Animal husbandry is the branch of agriculture concerned with animals that are raised for meat, fibre, milk, eggs, or other products. It includes day-to-day care, selective breeding and the raising of livestock. Husbandry has a long history, starting with the Neolithic revolution when animals were first domesticated, from around 13,000 BC onwards, antedating farming of the first crops. By the time of early civilisations such as ancient Egypt, cattle, sheep, goats and pigs were being raised on farms. Most livestock are herbivores, except for pigs and chickens which are omnivores. Ruminants like cattle and sheep are adapted to feed on grass; they can forage outdoors, or may be fed entirely or in part on rations richer in energy and protein, such as pelleted cereals. Pigs and poultry cannot digest the cellulose in forage, and require cereals and other high-energy foods.

Homoeopathy and homoeopathic medicines :

The central tenet of homoeopathy is that “like cures like” (in Latin: *similia similibus curentur*), in a holistic approach to the totality of the patient’s symptoms. Homeopathic medicines are based on the principle that high dilutions of potentially active molecules retain a memory of the original substance. Hence, the starting materials, the homeopathic stocks and/or mother tinctures are subjected to a process of serial dilution and succussion in order to potentize the product with an inert carrier material. Originally, Hahnemann employed this process to diminish the toxicity of potentially hazardous substances. The name potentization to characterize this process was given by him later.

From the safety point of view it is important to note first that, although homoeopathic treatments often utilize ultramolecular dilutions of the starting material, there are also homoeopathic medicines of considerably lower dilution which do contain molecules that may be active in the biochemical sense. Hence, although homeopathic medicines are in general considered to be safe when administered appropriately, toxicological aspects should not be neglected especially when using lower dilutions of unsafe starting material.

Homeopathy as Veterinary Homeopathy :

The idea of using Homoeopathy as a treatment for animals is termed "Veterinary Homeopathy" and dates back to the inception of homoeopathy; Hahnemann himself wrote and spoke of the use of homoeopathy in animals other than humans. The use of homeopathy in the organic farming industry is heavily promoted. Given that homoeopathy's effects in humans are due to the placebo effect and the counselling aspects of the consultation, such treatments are even less effective in animals. Studies have also found that giving animals placebos can play active roles in influencing pet owners to believe in the effectiveness of the treatment when none exists. This means that animals given homoeopathic remedies will continue to suffer, resulting in animal welfare concerns.

Principles of Homeopathy in Veterinary Medicine

1. **Law of Similars** – medicines are chosen based on symptom similarity.
2. **Minimum Dose** – ultra-dilute, potentized remedies are used.
3. **Individualization** – treatment is tailored to the animal’s constitution and symptoms.
4. **Holistic Approach** – considers physical, behavioral, and environmental factors.

Role and Benefits of Homeopathic Medicines in Animal Health:

- **Residue-Free & Safe:** No toxic residues in animal products.
- **Controls Antibiotic Resistance:** Reduces dependency on antimicrobials.
- **Cost-Effective:** Economical for farmers and requires minimal resources.
- **Eco-Friendly:** Compatible with organic and sustainable farming systems.
- **Holistic Healing:** Improves immunity, reduces stress, and enhances vitality.

Homoeopathy is defined as a therapeutic method that usually uses highly diluted preparations of substances, whose effects, when administered to healthy subjects, correspond to manifestations of the disorder (symptoms, clinical signs, and pathologic states). In homeopathy, natural substances are given in highly diluted preparations – so dilute that often none of the original substance may be present. Homoeopathic medicines come in many forms such as pellets, oral droplets, syrups, creams and ointments. Homoeopathic medicines are formed from a wide variety of substances—plants, animals, minerals, or chemicals and these medicines are commonly considered to carry a low risk of causing serious side effects.

Homoeopathy, although of German origin, is widely practiced in India, yet the government has recognized the disservice that homoeopathy had done to traditional systems of medicine. To promote the use of traditional medicine, the government in 1995 created the Department of Indian Systems of Medicine and Homoeopathy (ISM and H), which was renamed the Department of Ayurveda, Yoga and Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha and Homoeopathy (AYUSH) in 2003. India thus has given official recognition to multiple systems of medicine, including homoeopathy.

Within the scientific community, the use of homoeopathy in food-producing animals is highly controversial. However, there is evidence that homoeopathic remedies are widely used in these animals. For organic agriculture, the use of homoeopathy is even promoted. According to the European Commission Regulation (EC No 889/2008, Article 24[2]) (European Commission 2008) on organic agriculture, homoeopathic and other products should be used in preference to chemically synthesised allopathic veterinary treatment, provided that the resultant therapy is effective for the species of animal and the condition for which the treatment is intended.

Relationship between Homoeopathic medicine and animal keeper :

Homoeopathy is a distinct philosophy of medicine that has its roots in eighteenth century Germany, and subsequently spread to Europe, India, Australia, South America, the United States, and Canada. The underlying basis of homoeopathy is the principle that '**like cures like**', or that a substance that is capable, in toxic doses, of producing a set of symptoms is also capable, in much lower doses, of curing the same set of symptoms regardless of their perceived cause.

Animal keepers care for animals in home, zoos, aquariums, and amusement parks. They may create meal plans for animals, clean animal enclosures, and report injuries or unusual behaviour. They might also answer questions from the public and interact with students and classes on field trips. Some keepers work with broad groups of animals, such as birds, mammals, and reptiles, while others specialize in subgroups, such as primates or cats. There is also always the risk of being injured by a scared or aggressive animal

How to Homoeopathic medicine increased income of animal keeper?

Homoeopathic medicines derived from healthy or diseased animals or human sources raise concerns about microbiological and viral contamination. These issues are discussed, particularly with a view of minimizing the risk of exposure to transmissible spongiform encephalopathy (TSE) transmitting agents. The Head of Medicines Agencies Homoeopathic Medicinal Products Working Group has reviewed the points to consider on safety of homoeopathic medicines of biological origin.

When animal materials are sourced for production, safety precautions should be taken to avoid transmission of pathogenic agents to humans and/or animals. Starting materials of animal origin should comply with the principles of minimization the risk of transmission of pathogenic agents, taking into account the species specificities regarding harbouring infectious agents other than those related with the expected homoeopathic therapeutic agent. Possible species infectivity will be taken in consideration in the viral validation studies for the choice of relevant or, if needed, model viruses and will be part of the risk assessment.

The manufacturer of the stock or homoeopathic medicinal product should ensure that animal materials come from documented and recorded sources and should perform regular audits of the suppliers. The animal keeper should be subject to routine legal supervision by a competent veterinary authority. Any exception to these should be justified.

Healthy animals should be used for the production of homoeopathic medicinal products unless properly justified. Whenever donor animals keeper should be held in closed breeding and production herds. Wild animal should be avoided as far as possible. Animals are raised for a wide variety of products, principally meat, wool, milk, and eggs, but also including tallow, isinglass and rennet. Animals are also kept for more specialised purposes, such as to produce vaccines and antiserum (containing antibodies) for medical use. Where fodder or other crops are grown alongside animals, manure can serve as a fertiliser, returning minerals and organic matter to the soil in a semi-closed organic system. Homoeopathic medicine plays an important role in raising income of animal husbandry in such a ways:-

a) Dairy-Although all mammals produce milk to nourish their young, the cow is predominantly used throughout the world to produce milk and milk products for human consumption. Other animals used to a lesser extent for this purpose include sheep, goats, camels, buffaloes, yaks, reindeer, horses and donkeys.

b) Meat-Meat, mainly from farmed animals, is a major source of dietary protein around the world, averaging about 8% of man's energy intake. The actual types eaten depend on local preferences, availability, cost and other factors, with cattle, sheep, pigs and goats being the main species involved. Cattle generally produce a single offspring annually which takes more than a year to mature; sheep and goats often have twins and these are ready for slaughter in less than a year; pigs are more prolific, producing more than one litter of up to about piglets each year. Horses, donkeys, deer, buffalo, llamas, alpacas, guanacos and vicunas are farmed for meat in various regions. Some desirable traits of animals raised for meat include fecundity, hardiness, fast growth rate, ease of management and high food conversion efficiency.

c) Poultry-Poultry, kept for their eggs and for their meat, includes chickens, turkeys, geese and ducks. The great majority of laying birds used for egg production are chickens. Methods for keeping layers range from free-range systems, where the birds can roam as they will but are

housed at night for their own protection, through semi-intensive systems where they are housed in barns and have perches, litter and some freedom of movement, to intensive systems where they are kept in cages. The battery cages are arranged in long rows in multiple tiers, with external feeders, drinkers, and egg collection facilities. This is the most labour saving and

economical method of egg production but has been criticised on animal welfare grounds as the birds are unable to exhibit their normal behaviours.

In the developed world, the majority of the poultry reared for meat is raised indoors in big sheds, with automated equipment under environmentally controlled conditions. Chickens raised in this way are known as broilers, and genetic improvements have meant that they can be grown to slaughter weight within six or seven weeks of hatching. Newly hatched chicks are restricted to a small area and given supplementary heating. Litter on the floor absorbs the droppings and the area occupied is expanded as they grow. Feed and water is supplied automatically and the lighting is controlled. The birds may be harvested on several occasions or the whole shed may be cleared at one time

d) Aquaculture-Aquaculture has been defined as "the farming of aquatic organisms including fish, molluscs, crustaceans and aquatic plants and implies some form of intervention in the rearing process to enhance production, such as regular stocking, feeding, protection from predators, etc. Farming also implies individual or corporate ownership of the stock being cultivated. "In practice it can take place in the sea or in freshwater, and be extensive or intensive. Whole bays, lakes or ponds may be devoted to aquaculture, or the farmed animal may be retained in cages (fish), artificial reefs, racks or strings (shellfish). Fish and prawns can be cultivated in rice paddies, either arriving naturally or being introduced and both crops can be harvested together.

e) Insects-Bees have been kept in hives since at least the First Dynasty of Egypt, five thousand years ago, and man had been harvesting honey from the wild long before that. Fixed comb hives are used in many parts of the world and are made from any locally available material. In more advanced economies, where modern strains of domestic bee have been selected for docility and productiveness, various designs of hive are used which enable the combs to be removed for processing and extraction of honey. Quite apart from the honey and wax they produce, honey bees are important pollinators of crops and wild plants, and in many places hives are transported around the countryside to assist in pollination.

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