

Feasibility of homeopathy in a flock of Zerasca sheep

Pubblicato: Evid. Based Complement. Altern. Med., September 2007; 4: 65 - 68.

Benvenuti M.N.a, Pisseri F.b, Goracci J.a, Giuliotti L.a, Gugliucci B.M.c, Macchioni F.d, Gavazza A.c and Guidi G.c

a Dipartimento Produzioni Animali, Viale delle Piagge, 2 - 56124 Pisa.

b Libero professionista.

c Dipartimento Clinica Veterinaria, Via Livornese, S. Piero a Grado - Pisa.

d Dipartimento Patologia Animale, Profilassi e Igiene degli Alimenti, Viale delle Piagge, 2 - 56124 Pisa

Corresponding autor: novella@vet.unipi.it; Tel. 0502216893 - Fax 0502216901

Introduction. The control of parasitic diseases is one of the most important goals in animal health and welfare as far as environment safeguards and quality of products. Unfortunately, parasitic infections are too often treated by means of chemical products, resulting in anthelmintic resistance, ecotoxicological effects and deleterious consequences on animal health. These facts underline the needs for thorough parasite monitoring and the application of integrated parasite control practices. Among these, homeopathy could play a strategic role in combating health problems; however, at present there is a lack of scientific results that might indicate validated techniques to be used on a large scale.

The aim of this study was to investigate the feasibility of homeopathy in the control of parasite burden in farm animals. The study was carried out on Zerasca breed, an Italian local sheep breed, whose farming system permits the stability and sustainability of land resources in a mountainous area in northern Tuscany.

Material e Methods. The study lasted 12 months. A homeopathic examination was performed to collect all the information useful to identify the proper remedy to administer. The study involved 30 ewes divided in two groups. Sabadilla MK was administered twice, one after the first sampling and the other before the last one. Individual faecal and blood samples were collected two monthly. Faecal egg count (FEC) was performed using a modified McMaster technique (Permin & Hansen, 1998). Blood count was estimated by cell counter (HeCo SEAC). Statistical analysis was performed by ANOVA. Data referring parasites were logarithmically transformed [$y = \log(\text{FEC} + 25)$] to normalize error (Baker et al., 1997). Correlations between FEC and hematocrit (HCT) were estimated by Pearson's correlations.

Results. FEC resulted influenced by the date of sampling confirming a fluctuation linked with the season. Homeopathy did not influence parasite burden in the whole but a significant decrease ($p \leq 0.05$) in egg output was observed at the second and last sampling corresponding with the administration of the remedy. Data referring blood parameters did not show differences between the two groups. FEC and HCT showed an inverse correlation even if mean values were comprised between the normal range.

Conclusions. The study pointed out the advantages of a parasites monitoring and of an effective health programme limiting the use of chemical treatments.

References. Baker R.L., 1997. Resistance genetique des petits ruminants aux helminthes en Afrique. INRA Prod. Anim., 10: 99-110. Permin A. & Hansen J., 1998. Epidemiology, diagnosis and control of poultry parasites. FAO Animal Health Manual.

