

RGCB organized a Webinar on “Contemporary Relevance of Ethno-veterinary Practices in Disease Prevention and Primary Health Care for Livestock”

A webinar on “Contemporary Relevance of Ethno-veterinary Practices in Disease Prevention and Primary Health Care for Livestock” was organized by DBT’s Rajiv Gandhi Centre for Biotechnology (DBT-RGCB), Thiruvananthapuram on 29th September 2020, as part of the recently launched project “Inclusive Technology Interventions for Tribal Heritage Resilience of Kerala” with the financial support of Department of Science and Technology.



Dr. E. V. Soniya, Senior Scientist and Dean, RGCB delivered the welcome address, followed by Dr. Santhosh Kumar T. R, Director (I/C), RGCB and Dr. Madhu C., Director, Kerala State Animal Husbandry Department delivered the felicitation address. Prof. Balakrishnan Nair M. N. from Centre for Ethno-Veterinary Sciences and Practices, the University of Trans-Disciplinary Health Science and Technology, Bengaluru delivered the Keynote Address. Finally, Dr. Archana S., Veterinary Medical Officer, RGCB delivered the vote of thanks. Dr. Anish N. P., Scientist C & Assistant Registrar, RGCB was the webinar moderator. There were 70 participants, who were

mostly veterinarians from Kerala State Animal Husbandry Department and aspirants on Ethno-Veterinary practice within and outside the Country.

Dr. Soniya, one of the coordinators of the Tribal Heritage project, briefed the background for conducting the Webinar. RGCB has extended its wings to touch the society at grassroots level through appropriate scientific interventions. The main aim of project is the protection of Tribal Heritage through community empowerment. As part of the project, we are very keen to scientifically validate the traditional knowledge associated with human and animal health care. As Dr. Soniya said, the current webinar was for brainstorming the current approaches and developments in Ethno-veterinary Practices.

Documenting traditional knowledge is the need of the hour and proper scientific validation of this orally transmitted knowledge is an integral part of research in the area of ethnopharmacology. Dr. Santhosh Kumar quoted this in his felicitation address. Whereas, Dr. Madhu, while delivering his felicitation address, suggested that measures to reduce the incidence of antibiotics in animal products like milk or meat is a very good deliberation to the modern society. He added that integration of ethno-veterinary practice will definitely help us to achieve this goal.

Prof. Balakrishnan Nair, one of the pioneers of Ethno-Veterinary Practices in India narrated a scientific journey through Ethno-Veterinary Practices on the basis of his research findings and field success data. The problems faced by the current livestock management practices include high disease incidence in cross-breed animals & high treatment costs, indiscriminate use of antibiotics and other veterinary drugs in dairy animals leading to high veterinary drug residues in the animal products, threats to human health due to microbial resistance to antibiotics, loss of local breeds which have resistance to many diseases, reduced milk quality etc. In Prof. Nair's view, at present, we have a limited or no strategic implementation of regulatory policy focusing to reduce and control the use of antibiotics, the focus need to shift to integrated health care approach. He suggested that, the alternate approach will be the use of natural products derived from traditional health sciences and living traditions of the households. In India, we have a rich ethno-veterinary health tradition and the difference between Indian Traditional system and

Western medicine lies primarily in the fact that, in indigenous knowledge systems, the evaluation is "systemic", whereas in Western medicine, it is "atomic" or cellular. Both approaches undoubtedly have their uses. The big challenge is to evolve research methodology that accommodates two different epistemologies viz. Holistic, systemic framework of traditional knowledge with the reductionist & structural frame work of western sciences. Prof. Nair concluded his speech with a suggestion that adopting the Ethno-veterinary science and practices to combat infectious diseases in livestock has been identified and tested as a key game changer in reducing the use of antibiotics in veterinary practices. He suggested a 5-layer strategy for antibiotic reduction which includes improved animal and farm management, strategic use of local breeds, use of medicinal plants, milk quality control, and extra payment/incentives to the farmers who follow these practices.

The recorded talks of this webinar were archived and curated at YouTube for the benefit of posterity and the people with internet connectivity issues (<https://youtu.be/L4NXRj20fPg>).

Contact details:

Dr. Anish N. P.

E-mail: anishnp@rgcb.res.in;

Phone no.: 0471 2529693