

Abstract

Livestock industry is an integral part of rural livelihoods and cultural life of Bukusu community in western Kenya. External parasites mainly ticks adversely affect the development of this industry in Africa. The study aimed at comparing traditional and conventional approaches to livestock ticks control and management of animal ethno health in Bukusu community. This approach was hypothesized to provide a basis for further research on efficacy of comparable ethno products that may lead to discovery of useful ethno pharmacological agents.

As praxis socio-anthropological research, non-alienating, multi-strategic, dialogic, comparative literature review, participatory action research (PAR) and participatory rural appraisal (PRA) approaches involving 272 women and men aged between 18 and 118 years old from Bukusu community were analytically surveyed. This set of triangulation approaches were considered suitable due to considerable intra- and inter-cultural variability, rather than cultural homogeneity in studied population and highly individualized nature of animal health ethno knowledge. Approaches utilized are essential in non-experimental validation process of ethno knowledge.

Both traditional and conventional methods for animal health management are still being used alongside each other. Ethno veterinary knowledge was acquired, is used and practiced in the context of community's beliefs and taboos and comprised integrated tick control and animal health management ethno strategies. 27% of respondents recognized ethno knowledge application on livestock ticks control and animal ethno health management on subjects other than livestock (73%). Of 99% respondents motivated to practice ethno veterinary medicines, 63% were driven by socio-economic gains while 36% offered it free of charge to the community. By the end of the survey, community ethno practitioners had started regaining confidence in their ethno veterinary knowledge albeit existence of unresolved issues of bio piracy, spiritualism, bio prospecting, legislation, oath-taking, witchcraft and ritualism.

Studies showed that the Bukusu community is a repository of ethno veterinary knowledge for livestock health management and both conventional and traditional knowledge systems may complement one another. Integrating anti-tick ethno practices/agents in tick control may locally improve livestock industry, thus giving the already impoverished livestock-dependent rural

economy a fresh impetus largely following elucidation of scientific rationale of these ethnopractices/agents and deployment of some of them.