

The use of homeopathic remedies in the treatment of cows with mastitis

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Introduction

Two experiments on the use of homeopathic remedies for the treatment of cows with serous and catarrhal mastitis were carried out on two farms in the Moscow region, Russia. Mastitis was caused mainly by improper milking machine function because most of the equipment used in the observation period was worn-out. During the summer, cows were fetched to pasture, which increased the incidence of traumatic mastitis. On both farms, homeopathic remedies were used that are marketed by the German company Biologische Heilmittel Heel GmbH.

Materials and Methods

On both farms there was a loss in milk production; mastitic milk had a watery appearance and flakes in it. Affected quarters were reddened, edematous, painful, and hot to the touch. The California Mastitis Test was conducted. In the first experiment, 44 lactating cows with the same mastitis symptoms were equally allocated to a control or experimental group. In the second experiment, 32 cows with mastitis were equally allocated to two a control or experimental groups. For both experiments, cows in the control group received the antimicrobial protocol (Mastijet Forte administered intramammary for two days and then streptomycin injected IM) normally used on the farms. Cows of the experimental groups received a homeopathic treatment (5 mL injected in the upper part of the udder). For the first experiment, Traumeel ad us.vet. was administered SC for three days and then every other day. For the second experiment, Traumeel ad us.vet. and Echinacea compositum ad us. vet. were injected SC for three days and then every other day. For both experiment, if clinical signs of mastitis were still present after three days of the homeopathic treatment, streptomycin was administered IM concurrently with the homeopathic treatment on the fourth day and then every other day. The "symptom picture" of Traumeel ad us.vet. includes pain, inflammation, swelling and fever; and it is used for the treatment of trauma-related conditions. The "symptom picture" of Echinacea compositum ad us.vet. includes inflammation, fever, swelling, reddening; and it is prescribed for the stimulation of defense mechanisms of the host organism.

Results

A clinical cure was defined as complete resolution of clinical signs (udder not swollen, hot, or painful) and normal color and consistency of the milk. For the first experiment, the mean duration of mastitis for the experimental group was 2.4 days less than that for the control group. Similarly, for the second experiment, the mean duration of mastitis for the experimental group was 1.9 days less than that for the control group. In the experimental groups of both experiments, a clinical cure was achieved in all cows by 10 days after initiation of treatment; whereas, 27.3% of cows in the control group of first experiment and 25% of cows in the control group of the second experiment recovered > 10 days (up to three weeks) after initiation of treatment. During the first three days of treatment, in which no antibiotics were administered, 50% of the cows in the experimental group of the first experiment and 37.5% of cows in the experimental group of the second experiment were cured. A specific feature of the Echinacea compositum ad us. vet. is that a temporary exacerbation of the symptoms is often noticed (one to two days) at the beginning of its use, but after that a quick recovery takes place. This likely explains the lower percentage of recovered cows of the experimental group of the second experiment during the first three days of treatment, compared with that of recovered cows in the experimental group of the first experiment. The difference in the percentages of recovered cows in the experimental groups may also be explained by the fact that the experiments were conducted during different seasons.

Significance

The benefits of the homeopathic mastitis remedies used in these two experiments included quicker recovery of affected animals, increased milk production, and safety of the remedies for the health of the animals. Homeopathic remedies do not require any withdrawal period following treatment. The two farms of this study have since incorporated the homeopathic regimens evaluated into their standard mastitis treatment protocols.