

# Recognising ethnoveterinary medicine and community rights

An investment in our future

Evelyn Mathias

League for Pastoral Peoples and Endogenous Livestock  
Development

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science, cultural richness*, Bologna, 29 October 2010



# 8 questions

1. **What** is ethnoveterinary medicine?
2. **Why** the interest in ethnivet?
3. How are modern vet and ethnivet **different**?
4. Are all ethnivet systems the **same**?
5. What are the **limitations** of ethnivet?
6. What are the **strengths** of ethnivet?
7. How can we **use** ethnivet?
8. What to consider when **promoting** ethnivet?



# 1. What is ethnoveterinary medicine ?



# 1. What is ethnovet?

- ✿ (The study of) what livestock keepers do and know to keep their animals healthy and productive
- ✿ Information and practices developed by community over centuries
  - ◆ Observation
  - ◆ Experience
  - ◆ Experimentation
- ✿ Transferred by word of mouth
- ✿ Not static, changes over time



# 1. What is ethnovet?

- ✿ Not just medicinal plants!
- ✿ Also includes
  - ◆ Disease management, prevention, treatment
  - ◆ Breeding, housing, nutrition, treatment, surgery...
- ✿ Holistic – interplay of several factors, eg.
  - ◆ Breeds, management, plants, beliefs, etc.



# 1. What is ethnovet?



Sheep and goat  
keepers in West Java,  
Indonesia



# 1. What is ethnovet?

Health-promoting components of the Javanese goat + sheep system:

- ✿ Local breed
  - ◆ Indonesian thin tail sheep: hardiness, increased resistance to liver fluke
- ✿ Shed: appropriate to local climate, slatted floor (hygiene), disinfection with lime
- ✿ Supplements: salt licks and drenches with plant mixtures



## 2. Why interest in ethnoveget?



## 2. Why interest in ethnovet?

- ✱ >1950s: massive transfer of modern technologies and high-yielding breeds to developing countries
- ✱ But:
  - ◆ Technologies inappropriate and too expensive
  - ◆ High-yielding breeds could not cope with climate and fodder
- frequent failures
- development approaches changed



## 2. Why interest in ethnovet?

- ✱ Approaches changed from top-down to bottom-up (participation ↑)
- ✱ Increasing interest in and recognition of
  - ◆ value of local knowledge
  - ◆ rights of indigenous peoples and community rights
- ✱ 1986: Anthropologist Constance McCorkle coined term “ethnoveterinary medicine”



## 2. Why interest in ethnovet?

- ✿ Recent reasons for increasing interest:
  - ◆ Increasing resistance of micro-organisms to antibiotics and other chemical drugs
  - ◆ Massive abuse of antibiotics and other chemicals in many regions
    - Freely available
    - Often diluted and altered
    - Over- or underdosing because livestock keepers cannot read instructions



# 3. How are modern vet and ethnovet different?



# 3. How are modern vet and ethnovet different?



<----->  
Traditional Modern

Wide spectrum of animal healthcare systems

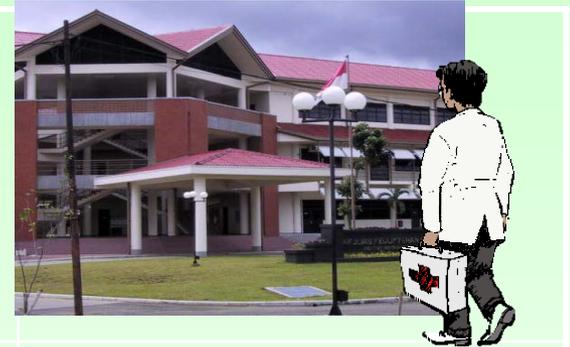
- ✦ "Traditional" to "modern"
- ✦ Many variations between extremes

In reality few systems match ends of spectrum

- ✦ Most combine characteristics of both ends
- ✦ Most are dynamic and changing



### 3. How are modern vet and ethnovet different?



**Integration**

Yes, with human and animal (health)care with culture, religion, environment, etc

No, separated from other aspects

**Classifica-  
tion**

Based on disease symptoms, location, climatic conditions, etc

Mostly causal



# 3. How are modern vet and ethnovet different?

Example classification difference:

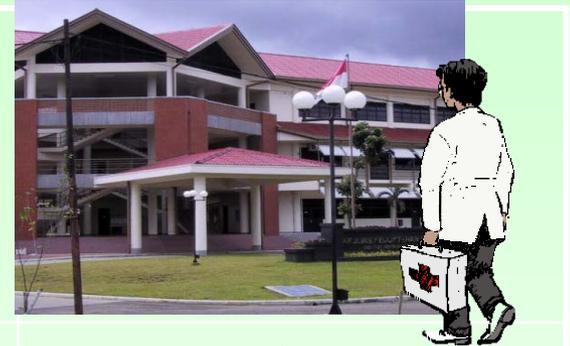
Academic vet med:  
trypanosomosis +  
haemorrhagic septicaemia



Raika camel herders refer to both diseases as *magravala* = hill disease, occurs during rainy season when grazing in the hills



### 3. How are modern vet and ethnovet different?



**Disease causation**

Natural and super natural

Natural (and psychological)

**Treatment approach**

Holistic: treats whole patient

Targets specific organs or micro-organisms



### 3. How are modern vet and ethnovet different?



**Diagnosis**

Observation and the senses

Many high-tech methods

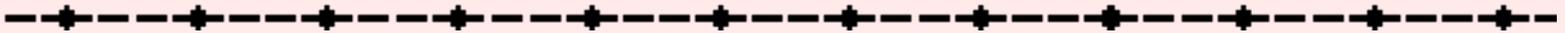
**Prevention and treatment**

Stimulates immunity and improves the general condition

Seeks to control micro-organisms



# 4. Are all ethnovegetal systems the same?



# 4. Are all ethnoveget systems the same?



**No**, there are as many variations as there are societies!



# 4. Are all ethnovet systems the same?

**Differences in concepts and practices due to:**

- ✦ **Culture**
- ✦ **Profession**

Common trend:

- ✦ Pastoralists
  - ◆ know more ethnovet than farmers
  - ◆ Prepare fewer decoctions
  - ◆ Use often single



# 4. Are all ethnovet systems the same?

Differences in concepts and practices due to:

- ✦ **Environment, vegetation and climate**



# 4. Are all ethnovet systems the same?

**Differences** in concepts and practices due to:

- ✦ **Species (camel, buffalo, pig, etc)**
- ✦ **Status and use of animal**



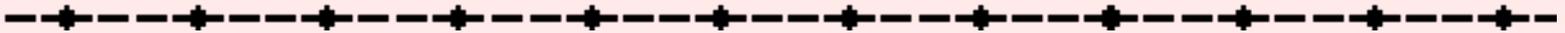
# 4. Are all ethnovet systems the same?

**Differences** in concepts and practices due to:

- ✳ **Gender, work division**
- ✳ **Type and intensity of use:** commercial, subsistence, etc.



# 5. What are the limitations of ethnoveget?



# 5. What are the limitations of ethnobotany?

- ✱ Some practices are ineffective
- ✱ Some practices are harmful
- ✱ Plant medicines:
  - ◆ often only seasonally available
  - ◆ difficult to standardise
  - ◆ cumbersome to prepare



# 6. What are the strengths of ethnoveget?



## 6. What are the strengths of ethnovet?

- ✿ Many practices do work
- ✿ Locally available
- ✿ Livestock keeper understands it and can prepare it
- ✿ Low cost



# 6. What are the strengths of ethnovet?

## Examples of effective practices

### Diagnosis

**Sand ball test** of camel herders for trypanosomosis

(Raika and other pastoralists)

### Management strategies

**Mobility and grazing management**

helps reduce parasites, anthrax, etc.  
(esp. pastoralists)

### Treatment

**Karanji (*Derris indica*) oil against scabies**

(Raika and others in India)



# 7. How can we use ethnovet?



# 7. How can we use ethnovet?

1. Understanding ethnovet can further understanding between vets and extension personnel and community
2. Use ethnovet as resource for community development
3. Source of medicine and practices



# 7. How can we use ethnovet?

## Understanding ethnovet

- ◆ Disease occurrence
- ◆ Types of animals affected
- ◆ Spread and prevention of diseases, etc.

→ integrating local info with info from modern epidemiology

“Participatory epidemiology”

→ integrating local info into veterinary curricula

curricula more appropriate in marginal areas



# 7. How can we use ethnovet?

Help communities

- document, improve and use their ethnovet
- combine it with appropriate Western approaches



# 8. What to consider when documenting and promoting ethnovet?



## 8. What to consider when documenting and promoting ethnobotany?

- ✱ Ethnobotany is developed and **owned** by communities
- ✱ We need to **respect community rights** and ensure that their knowledge does not get abused!
- ✱ We need to make sure to **conserve the resource base!**



## 8. What to consider when documenting and promoting ethnobotany?

- ✱ Inform yourself about legal frameworks before documenting ethnobotany plants in communities!



WTO

WIPO

CITES

FAO

Patents

Bilateral  
agreements

PLC

CBD

Farmers'  
rights

Treaties

Laws

ABS

Indigenous  
knowledge

TRIPS

Ethics



# Summary

- ✿ Ethnovet = what communities do and know to keep their animals healthy
- ✿ Holistic and dynamic!
- ✿ Understanding ethnovet can further understanding of vets and communities
- ✿ Includes many potential practices
- ✿ Useful tool for development



# Summary

- ✿ Source of alternative medicines
- ✿ Can be combined with academic vet med
- ✿ Promotion of ethnovet needs to
  - ◆ Respect community rights
  - ◆ Ensure that
    - ◆ communities benefit
    - ◆ the resource base is maintained



# Further reading

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# Thank you!



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