

Application of alternative treatments



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Outline (WP 4 & WP9)

1. Aims of our research
2. Methodology
3. Main findings
4. General conclusions
5. Recommendations



Aims of our research

EC 889/2008 - Art. 24

”Where ... animals become sick ... they shall be treated immediately....
Phytotherapeutic, homeopathic products ... shall be used in preference
to chemically-synthesized allopathic veterinary treatment ... provided
that their therapeutic effect is effective ...”

- Is the therapeutic effectiveness provided to prevent suffering?
- Assessment of the conditions, use and efficacy of alternative treatments
- Potential to reduce or replace antimicrobials by homeopathy or phytotherapy ?



Methodology



Current Treatment Situation on Farms



Systematic Reviews on Efficacy



Legal Conditions

Treatment success to be expected?



Expert-Workshops



Findings of the reviews



- Some studies conclude potential, but it was not possible to draw firm conclusions
 - Limitations in the study design
 - Not one scientific study was ever repeated
- Obstacles for research
 - Lack of funding
 - Only few research bodies in Europe
 - Poor research network
- *Lege artis* procedure for the use in animals rarely implemented



Legal situation



- National legislation supporting/declining the use
- Simplified registration procedure does not require an verification of efficacy
- Often no remedies registered for use in food-producing animals
- Manufacturers: No interest in registration of herbal remedies due to high costs and low profits without protection of composition



Findings on the current use



- Remedies were mainly bought without consultation of a veterinarian
- No thorough diagnostic performed
- Very poor follow-up checks of treatment outcome
- Rarely any documentation
- Poor expertise of users

Specific findings: homeopathy



- Research:
 - no individualized treatments procedure
 - In general no experts in homeopathy involved
- Obstacles for use:
 - Veterinarians' attitudes to effectiveness
 - No education on homeopathy

Specific findings: phytotherapy



- Different types of approval
- Mainly use of feed additives/care products with suggested “health claims” but no therapeutic indication
- Specification of content or composition of ingredients or dosage generally poor
- Obstacles:
 - Very restricted availability of registered phytotherapeutic remedies for food-producing animals



General Conclusions

- No sufficient evidence for therapeutic effectiveness due to
 - Lack of clinical control trials and repetition
 - Lack of expertise in farming practice
 - No verification of treatment outcome and documentation
 - Demands in Art. 24 (EC 889/2008) are not complied with
- Risk of poor treatment success and thus extended suffering of animals**

Recommendations



- Implementation of a *lege-artis* treatment procedure
- Verification of therapy outcome
- Target-oriented documentation
- Improvement of education and training
- Centralized registration of remedies on a European level should be considered

Therapeutic success should always be in focus!



Specific recommendations



For research on both types of therapy:

- Implement and repeat clinical trials study with design of scientific quality → control of effectiveness at farm level
- Provide funding and strengthen collaboration in research



For phytotherapy:

- Ensure knowledge on active ingredients and appropriate dosage as well as compatibility with other ingredients
- Improve availability of herbal remedies by provision of protection



Need for modification of EU legislation:

Preference for homeopathy and phytotherapy by Art.24(EC 889/2008) is in question, therefore it is recommended to

- Implement mandatory follow-up checks and documentation of treatments on farm level to ensure animal health and welfare
- Ensure the availability of expertise
- Assign the main responsibility for the use of homeopathy/ phytotherapy to a veterinarian

