

Homeopathy in Organic Dairy Practice

Trevor Adams, MRCVS

Homeopathy is the perfect subject to be discussing at this conference because in my opinion it can play a large part in the management of livestock and by using it in this way you will contribute positively to the health of the animals.

How many of you have used or are using Homeopathy on your farms?

This afternoon, I want to achieve two goals; for those of you new to Homeopathy I wish to introduce you to the subject and show how by using homeopathy in your herds you are adding another strategy to achieve optimum animal health and thus production. For those of you that already use homeopathy I want to challenge your perceptions of Homeopathy. By the end of this session, I wish to ensure that you know what Homeopathy is – more importantly what it is not !! but most importantly what it can help you achieve.

I am going to address you for a short while and then I hope you will join in and give us your experiences or ask some questions. However one question that I am not going to answer is how Homeopathy works. It does!

Homeopathy

Homeopathy is a system of medicine formulated some 200 years ago by a German physician and which is practised today under the same principles as were set out at that time and it recognises that we are all unique individuals.

I briefly want to consider what we mean by health and disease. The body, has an natural ability to heal itself – as witnessed by the way a wound heals, a fracture heals, or a viral cold clears up. Health can be described as mind and body in harmony with itself and its environment - or 'at ease'. When this balance is disturbed, we have disease. This disturbance can be caused by a number of disease forces – stress – infectious agents or what we often call in homeopathy – exciting causes.

It is important to remember that symptoms of disease are actually the result of the body's response to this disease force – and not produced by the disease force directly.

Homeopathy works by stimulating the body to follow this healing process. It neither replaces any body function or introduces substances into the body in measurable quantities - it merely encourages the body to follow its instinct to restore its balance.

One can summarise it thus; homeopathy restores health, while conventional medicine achieves health in the main by removing disease forces or replacing faulty function.

We use homeopathy according to a number of Principles

Homeopathy recognises that each being is a unique individual and the major principle of Homeopathy is:

Like cures like

This means that to treat a sick individual with particular symptoms, you use a remedy that produces similar symptoms in a healthy individual. Any substance introduced into the body acts as a disease force. (This includes medicines) The body reacts by producing symptoms. The wealth of information

about these symptoms collected from giving substances to healthy individuals provides the basis of our knowledge for treating disease. This process is called Proving and this information is collated in a Materia Medica – the ‘bible’ of Homeopaths. Thus, there are thousands of homeopathic remedies, each with its own set of unique symptoms that have been recorded. So for every disease situation that occurs, there is a remedy to cure it. The art of Homeopathy is to find it.

In deciding on the remedy to use it is most important to consider all the symptoms and characteristics shown by the sick individual, not just the particular problem that concerns you. This is the principle of the **Totality of Symptoms**. Thus, it is most likely that a case of *Pasteurella* pneumonia in one individual will need to use a different remedy to his next door neighbour with the same infection but in an individual with different other characteristics.

We are stimulating the body to heal itself and so we only need enough stimulation to achieve this. Therefore we use the **Minimum Dose**. Also, because any substance can act as a disease force, it is important to avoid encouraging the body to produce new symptoms, hence homeopathic remedies have been diluted and are only used as and when required rather than follow a set dosage regime. The preparation of homeopathic remedies involves dilution and succussion or shaking. The more this is carried out the higher the potency of the remedy – the more dilute the remedy the greater its power.

Conventional therapy tends to use different medicines for different symptoms and so often several medicines are given. With Homeopathy using the totality principle, we give a remedy that covers all the symptoms and so we only need **One Remedy at a Time**.

The Vital Force is the life force – that which makes the difference between a live individual and a dead body. The vital force is the energy which enables the body to heal. The strength of the VF determines firstly whether an individual will in fact respond to the administration of a remedy and secondly the strength or potency of the prescription given.

The manner in which a cure occurs is expected to follow a definite path - the **Direction of Cure**. It is important that a disease is cured properly rather than suppressed to be followed by a more internal disease.

It is important to consider **Susceptibility**. If some-one with a bad cold is in a room full of people, some of those will develop a cold and some will not - depending on their susceptibility. Susceptibility can be influenced by breeding, and management. All the farmers who have used Homeopathy over a period of time have found that the general health of the stock has improved – their susceptibility to disease forces, has reduced.

I have spoken about **Exciting Causes** or disease forces upsetting the balance of the individual. These may be changes in weather, diet, housing or challenges by infectious agents such as bacteria or viruses. If these remain unresolved they become what we term **Maintaining Causes or Obstacles to Cure**. It is probably true to say that conventional drugs, drugs such as antibiotic and steroids, etc. are so strong that they can compensate for poor husbandry. With homeopathy you have to look at ventilation, diet, housing etc and correct these otherwise your homeopathic remedies will not be so effective. These maintaining causes must be removed.

These are the principles on which we apply homeopathy.

Homeopathy in Animals

Homeopathy was formulated to treat humans and the provings have been carried out on healthy human volunteers. However homeopathy has been shown to work well in animals despite being restricted by the fact that human homeopathy relies much on emotional symptoms (feelings and dreams) and subjective symptoms (the type of pain endured), particularly for treating chronic disease. These are difficult to assess in animals. So why does homeopathy prove useful in animals – Mammals tend to have similar organ systems. The biggest discrepancy is with the bovine digestive system and the reproductive systems which vary among the species. Very few if any provings have been carried out in animals. However a veterinary materia medica is slowly being established using information gathered from toxicology, and clinical experience.

We are also looking at herds and flocks and yet homeopathy is an individual medicine. How does this work?

Some remedies have particular affinities for particular tissues or organs and will treat problems in these areas irrespective of the type of animal involved. Arnica is the best example of this. Also a closely bred group of animals, kept in the same environment and fed the same food can successfully be treated as an individual.

Developing Healthy Flocks and Herds - Treatment and Prevention

One of the most valuable properties of Homeopathy is that remedies that are used to treat an animal with symptoms can also be used to prevent those symptoms occurring in circumstances where you think disease may develop. Hence we know that Arnica is useful in treating bruising and trauma. If given before such trauma is inflicted (eg., when disbudding or castrating) the effects on tissue damage can be much reduced. Aconite is particularly useful in conditions which are brought on or aggravated by dry, cold easterly winds, so if stock are subjected to extremes of this type of weather, a dose of aconite given immediately can prevent potential problems of pneumonia or mastitis caused by exposure to this weather.

Using Homeopathy as a management tool means that one tries to anticipate problems and use remedies to prevent the emergence of disease states in animals. Over time this has the effect of reducing the susceptibility in the herd and thereby increasing the overall health of the herd.

Whilst talking about prevention we must look at the subject of nosodes. On many farms this is Homeopathy and they are the only experience that farmers have with Homeopathy. Nosodes are made from the products of disease, diseased tissues or the organisms producing disease. Unfortunately they are not truly homeopathic. They are being used in an isopathic way. **Same treating same.**

Nosodes can be made for any disease and despite the comments just made are often used successfully in the treatment and prevention of problems on the farm. They have proved useful in problems such as New Forest Eye. One condition that has a more variable result with nosodes is Mastitis. I do not need to tell you that mastitis is not a simple disease like New Forest Eye. There are a number of factors which may be involved in its cause. There are a number of Obstacles to Cure. Even so Chris Day published the results of a trial that he carried out on a farm.

Caulophyllum is a remedy made from the American plant, Blue Cohosh. The Native Americans were aware that this plant had an affinity with the uterine musculature and in homeopathic form it is used to promote the normal contraction of uterine musculature at parturition. If parturition is normal then there is less chance of post-parturient problems – retention of placenta, metritis, mastitis and this was demonstrated in another paper by Chris Day.

A trial in Scotland using a remedy called **Sepia** prepared from the ink of the cuttlefish, showed that if this remedy was given to every cow after calving there was a significant improvement in the fertility indices of the herd.

Whilst it is difficult to assess emotional states in animals, we are aware that cattle suffer from separation – withdrawing one animal from a group or calf from a mother. There is a remedy called **Ignatia** which is very useful in treating ailments that are caused by grief brought on by separation and although it is not the only remedy that one could use following grief farmers have found it useful in cows that have failed to settle after calving or failed to milk as well.

Preparation of Homeopathic Remedies

Trevor Adams, MRCVS

Any substance, plant, animal or mineral can be made into a homeopathic remedy. The process of producing a remedy is called Potentisation. There are 2 stages in this process – dilution and succussion. Potentisation enables the energy in the material to be available for healing.

All material is treated until it is in a soluble form and is then subject to dilution and succussion (rhythmic shaking). Dilutions can be centesimal or decimal. In UK we usually use centesimal potencies and the dilution is 1 part in 100 parts at each stage. Each dilution is followed by succussion and this imparts kinetic energy to the remedies. Thus as the potency increases, the homeopathic strength is greater although dilution is higher.

The initial solution is known as the Mother Tincture. For 1c potency, 1 drop of the Mother Tincture is added to 99 drops of water/ethanol mixture and the mixture is succussed. For 2c potency, 1 drop of the 1c potency is added to 99 drops of water/ethanol mixture and succussed. This process is repeated to reach the required potency. In practice we use the following potencies – 6c, 12c, 30c, 200c and 1000c or 1M

Administration of Homeopathic Remedies to Animals

Homeopathic remedies are prepared in liquid – a mixture of alcohol and water.

Tablets and Powders

These can be impregnated by the homeopathic liquid for administration by mouth to individual animals. Powder can be sprinkled on to food although there is more risk of it not being so effective.

Water

Liquid can be added to the water trough to dose groups of animals

Sprays

Liquid can be added to water in an aerosol spray. The spray can be applied to any moist mucous membrane – ocular, nasal, oral or vaginal

Injections

Liquid can be injected into the body.