

Ethnoveterinary Treatment of Horses by the Great Sioux Nation

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Through the observations of the natural world around them, many Native American societies have accumulated an immense knowledge of how to utilize their surrounding fauna and flora for food, medicine, shelter and clothing. Not only did these societies use native plants for themselves but for their domesticated animals as well. This study focused on the native plants used in ethnoveterinary treatments of horses by the Lakota (Sioux) People of the Standing Rock Indian Reservation located in South and North Dakota. No known ethnoveterinarian study of this nature has previously been conducted on the Standing Rock Indian Reservation. During the summer of 2012 we conducted a literature review to access available knowledge of native plants used in ethnoveterinary treatment of horses as well as began to interview enrolled tribal members about how native plants were used in this process, i.e. identification of plant, parts of the plants used and how they were administered. Sixteen plants were documented from the literature review and interviews as being used by the Lakota People to treat horses for distemper, wounds, sore muscles, urinary tract infections and other ailments. Our interviews concluded that horses do continue to play an important role among many of the Lakota People on Standing Rock, although further interviews need to be completed to fully understand to what extent native plants are used today to treat horses in ethnoveterinary practices.