EXPERIMENTAL INTOXICATION OF SHEEP WITH LEAVES OF BRUNFELSIA SP.

Fabio Landel Alysson Araújo Franklin¹, Gustavo Wilson Sousa Mello¹, Ciro José Sousa Carvalho¹, Alexandre Celso Soares Dias¹, Franklin Riet-Correa², Silvana Maria Medeiros Sousa Silva¹

¹Division of Animal Pathology, Universidade Federal do Piauí, Teresina, ²Department of Animal Pathology, Universidade Federal de Campina Grande, Patos, Brazil

In Brazil currently there are 122 known species of poisonous plants to livestock. Recently in a survey in Northern Piauí 15 toxic plants for ruminants and horses were identified, and another seven plants were suspected of being toxic, but without demonstration of its toxicity. One of these plants was Brunfelsia sp, known as “manacá, which is reported by farmers as toxic to ruminants and donkeys at the beginning of the rainy season. Poisoned animals show nervous signs and recovered if removed from the pastures invaded by the plant. This study aimed to reproduce, experimentally, the intoxication by the leaves of Brunfelsia sp. in sheep, comparing the clinical picture with the signs reported by farmers in the spontaneous poisoning. Four 6-months-old crossbred castrated male hair sheep, ranging from 21 to 29.5 kg, were used in the experiment. Before starting the experiment, the animals were dewormed and underwent a seven-day period of adjustment with daily clinical examinations. The leaves of Brunfelsia sp. used in the experiment were collected in the municipality of Caraúbas of Piauí, northern Piauí, and brought to Teresina where they were given orally to two sheep. The other two sheep were used as control. Treated sheep received a single dose of 10 g of leaves per kg. Six hours after administration of the plant Sheep 1 showed salivation and diarrhea, and 2h 45min later it was apathetic and idle. Forty five hours after administration showed severe incoordination with increased wide-base stance, reluctance to move, and seizures characterized by involuntary movements of the neck, mouth (continued chewing) and eyelids (eyes opening and closing), salivation, limb extension followed by falls and tonic-clonic contractions (paddling). Convulsions occurred at intervals of approximately one hour and lasted nearly 5 minutes. Clinical signs observed in Sheep 2 were similar to those observed in Sheep 1, but the seizures lasted on average three minutes at intervals of less than 1 hour. In two sheep, the seizures ceased in about 34 hours after the first seizure. Clinical signs were similar than those reported by farmers. It is concluded that Brunfelsia sp. is toxic to ruminants causing nervous signs, mainly seizures.