

Estudios etnoveterinarios entre pastoras tzotziles como base del programa de mejoramiento genético del borrego Chiapas

*Raúl Perezgrovas Garza**

*Hilda Castro Gámez***

*Althea L. Lambert****

ABSTRACT

Ethnoveterinary medicine has been prolific in studies about animal health even though they imply a holistic analysis of traditional knowledge about animal production. In this work, the case of Chiapanecan Tzotzil female shepherds is presented. These women, besides using ritual medicine based on herbs to cure their animals, possess wide empirical knowledge which is useful in other aspects of sheep raising. This centenary experience of the indigenous female shepherds is being used to guide the studies on genetic improvement by selection of the Chiapas sheep: the empirical parameters by which these Tzotzil women choose their best animals are being used to establish objective criteria for selection within the nucleus herd at the Autonomous University of Chiapas. In this way, the subjective evaluation carried out by the female shepherds as far as the length, usefulness and softness of the fleece for the purposes of weaving, has been used to establish in a quantitative way that the best-quality raw material is the one which comes from fleece in conical tufts reaching 18 cm in 6 months, and which are made up of long, thick fibers with a diameter range between 33 and 55 microns; and short, thin fibers between 18 to 25 microns. The long fiber:short fiber ratio should be 1:2. It has also been found that the season and the phenotypic variety have a significant effect on the parameters of wool production and growth in the Chiapas sheep; these show higher figures during the rainy season (june-november), and the white variety shows higher productive indexes.

*Instituto de Estudios Indígenas. Universidad Autónoma de Chiapas.

José Felipe Flores No. 14, San Cristóbal de las Casas, Chiapas. México.

**Depto. de Genética. Facultad de Medicina Veterinaria y Zootecnia. UNAM

*** New Zealand Pastoral Agriculture Research Institute, en Chiapas con una Cátedra Patrimonial de Excelencia de CONACyT

E-mail: rgrovas@montebello.unach.mx

