EVALUATION OF THE OCCURRENCE OF ENDOPARASITES IN CATTLE USED IN OX CARTS DURING THE TRINDADE PILGRIMAGE, GOIÁS

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The ox cart pilgrimage in Trindade is a nationally recognized event, as it is not only the largest ox cart pilgrimage in the world but also acknowledged as a heritage site by the National Institute of Historical and Artistic Heritage. During the event, over 400 ox carts traverse Trindade, Goiás, making it a national event that attracts animals from various parts of Brazil. Each ox cart typically carries an average of eight animals. Given the large concentration of livestock, there are sanitary risks, such as the dissemination of diseases and parasites. The transportation of cattle requires an animal transit guide, which ensures basic compliance measures, such as proof of vaccination. However, there is no regulation concerning parasitic diseases, such as helminthiasis. The objective of this project was to analyze the occurrence of endoparasites in the cattle present during the pilgrimage and to explore potential prophylactic measures. A total of 164 cart drivers were interviewed using a standardized questionnaire containing questions about endoparasite prophylaxis. Additionally, representative samples were collected from 97 ox carts, with at least four samples per cart. Regarding the use of anthelmintics, 75.61% reported using some chemical compound, 20.73% did not use any, and 3.66% were unable to respond. Among the interviewed cart drivers, 31.71% indicated that their animals consume water from streams, 9.14% from ponds, 5.49% from artesian wells, 3.66% directly from rivers, and 2.44% from cisterns and tanks. The primary parasites identified were Eimeria sp. (17.52%), strongyles (6.18%), and Moniezia sp. (1.03%). The parasitic load identified for helminth species was low, while that for Eimeria was relatively higher, which may indicate risks of environmental contamination at sites with high animal concentration if appropriate prophylactic measures are not implemented.

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