Abstract

In southern Sudan, livestock keepers identified a chronic wasting disease in adult cattle as one of their most-serious animal-health problems. Participatory-appraisal (PA) methods and conventional veterinary-investigation methods were used to characterise the chronic wasting disease and identify linkages between indigenous knowledge and modern veterinary knowledge. The local characterisation of chronic wasting encompassed trypanosomosis, fasciolosis, parasitic gastroenteritis and schistosomosis (as both single and mixed infections).A standardised PA method called matrix scoring had good reproducibility when investigating local perceptions of disease-signs and disease causes. Comparison of matrix-scoring results showed much overlap with modern veterinary descriptions of cattle diseases and the results of conventional veterinary investigation. Applications of PA methods in remote areas with very limited veterinary infrastructure are discussed. The validation of data derived from PA is discussed by reference to the low sensitivity of 'field-friendly' diagnostic tests for important cattle diseases.