

Yucca—The Wonder Plant?

Written by Press Release
Thursday, 19 February 2015 16:25



In the 1980's and early 90's, glucosamine, msm, chondroitin sulfate, etc., were not "fashionable". Many horse owners at that time used yucca to promote joint health because it was thought that yucca had anti-inflammation properties.

Of course, clinical data did not exist and therapeutic claims were not allowed. As soon as glucosamine and the In other ingredients became the norm, yucca was pushed to the back burner. Indeed, many animal owners to this day are not familiar with yucca and its uses as well as many manufacturers and distributors of animal supplements. Perhaps we should look back at actual events that took place and people involved to obtain a better understanding of the versatility of yucca.

In the 1960's the FDA registered Yucca Schidigera as generally safe for humans and animals as a flavoring agent. Not sure why it received this designation but it has served as a guide over the years to let people know that yucca is a natural plant that has never shown any serious side effects for humans or animals. It is interesting to note that of the forty nine species of yucca, only the yucca schidigera species was listed with a gras designation. The yucca schidigera only grows in a geographical stretch from Baja up through California, Arizona, with a small slice in Nevada and Utah. Today, most of the yucca sold commercially comes from Baja and Arizona.

In the 1950's Dr. Lock (not his real name) and Mr. Stalk (not his real name) did much research with yucca as a treatment for arthritis. They supplied a medical clinic in California with yucca capsules to administer to arthritic patients over a period of many months. The clinic determined that the patients using the yucca were progressing much better than the patients who were not. Using this information, the two gentlemen began marketing yucca capsules as treatment for arthritis and sold one million dollars in yucca capsules in one year. This was

Yucca—The Wonder Plant?

Written by Press Release

Thursday, 19 February 2015 16:25

remarkable considering this was in the 1950's. This did not last long. The regulators, apparently under pressure from big pharm, came in and closed them down. They had to agree never to sell yucca with any claims whatsoever and were fined five million dollars which their attorneys were able to negotiate away. Dr. Lock, who had a PHD in chemistry and botany, went on to research and develop many other uses for yucca while Mr. Stalk continued to sell yucca capsules for many years.

One of the papers from Dr lock told of the proliferation of microorganisms of the steroid saponin in the yucca schidigera. There are three types of saponins found in many plants around the world, the alkaloid, the triptertine, and the steroid saponin. Dr Lock's papers tell how the saponin causes this proliferation of microorganisms helps to break down solids, increases the efficiency of the digestive tract, and improves feed utilization. This same theory is used when yucca is used in sludge ponds and septic systems to break down solids.

Another use of yucca today is as an animal feed additive for odor control. The saponin binds to ammonia thereby holding the ammonia so that it is not released into the atmosphere which helps to reduce odor. This use is probably used extensively at hog pens.

The drought in California has prompted many farmers to utilize what little precious water they have. Many thousands of gallons of yucca liquid extract are sold to farmers in the San Joaquin Valley as use as water wetter. The saponin helps to penetrate the soil and take water and nutrients to the roots. Again, this is the result of the microorganisms at work.

Dr Peter Cheeke, once professor emeriti at Oregon State University, wrote a paper on yucca and its many uses. Dr Cheeke wrote that the saponin in yucca destroyed certain types of protozoa, especially the type that causes EPM. He wrote that much research was needed, but he did suggest that a daily intake of yucca just may be beneficial.

So, in conclusion, with what we know, and without making any claims whatsoever, it may be worthwhile adding yucca to our animal's daily diet. One can be fairly confident of its safety, and it just may be as important as any ingredient in the supplements in use today.