RESEARCH NOTE

HUMAN CONSUMPTION OF RUMEN FLUKES OF CATTLE IN INDIA

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Abstract. The practice of eating rumen flukes of cattle by a section of people living in Meghalaya, a north eastern State of India, is reported in this communication. Economically backward, some rural people belonging to Khasi, Jaintia, Garo, and Karbi tribes of Christian and Nepali communities who eat beef are accustomed to consuming cooked flukes during breakfast, meals, and also along with rice beer or alcohol. Inspection of the rumens of cattle during slaughter indicated a prevalence of flukes belonging to Cotylophoron, Paramphistomum, Calicophoron, Gastrothylax, and Fischoederius genera in 74% cases, and their collection from rumen ranged approximately from 50g to 600g. Biochemical analysis of flukes found 12.60% total protein, 0.78% fat, and 0.87% ash on fresh weight basis. High prevalence of flukes, easy visualization in rumen, their bulk collection, presence of nutritive value, absence of any ill effect, and lack of imminent danger of transmissibility are believed to be the rationales influencing their consumption by people. It is suggested that dietary benefits obtained from flukes might contribute to the energy transfer and inclusion in the food web.

Keywords: rumen flukes, human consumption, India