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AFRICAN LOCAL KNOWLEDGE & LIVESTOCK HEALTH

Diseases & Treatments in South Africa

WILLIAM BEINART & KAREN BROWN

Understanding local knowledge has become a central academic project among those interested in Africa and developing countries. In South Africa, land reform is gathering pace and African people hold an increasing proportion of the livestock in the country. Animal health has become a central issue for rural development. Yet African veterinary medical knowledge remains largely unrecorded. This book seeks to fill that gap. It captures for the first time the diversity, as well as the limits, of a major sphere of local knowledge.

Beinart and Brown argue that African approaches to animal health rest largely in environmental and nutritional explanations. They explore the widespread use of plants as well as biomedicines for healing. While rural populations remain concerned about supernatural threats, and many men think that women can harm their cattle, the authors challenge current ideas on the modernisation of witchcraft. They examine more ambient forms of supernatural danger expressed in little-known concepts such as *mohato* and *umkhondo*. They take the reader into the homesteads and kraals of rural black South Africans and engage with a key rural concern - vividly reporting the ideas of livestock owners. This is groundbreaking research which will have important implications for analyses of local knowledge more generally as well as effective state interventions and animal treatments in South Africa.

The Authors

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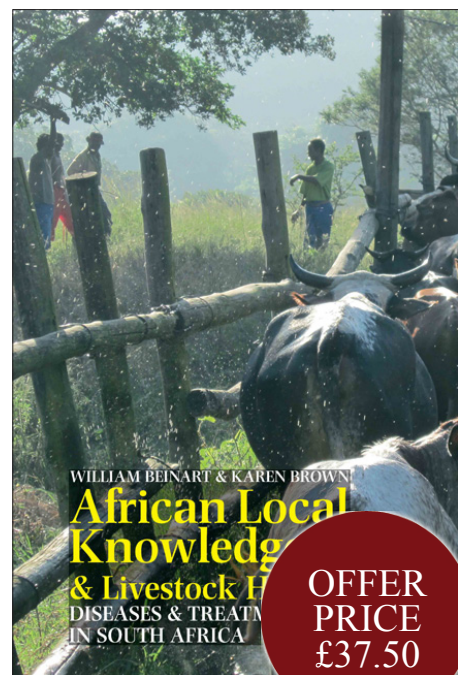
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