Pharmacological properties of benzodiazepines in animals

W. F. REHM AND U. SCHATZMANN

ABSTRACT
Benzodiazepines are used in veterinary medicine because of their taming, sedative and skeletal muscle-relaxant effects. The pharmacological properties of benzodiazepines in animals are very species-specific, particularly the reaction of the animal and the duration of action. The effects in ruminants, pigs, dogs and cats are discussed.

INTRODUCTION
In veterinary medicine benzodiazepines are used mainly as drugs for taming aggressive animals, as sedatives and for muscle relaxation. They belong to a large group of psychopharmacologically active compounds which suppress many physiological functions of the animal and reduce both motor activity and aggressiveness. In general, they have no anaesthetic effect. Figure 2.1 lists the most important benzodiazepines relevant for veterinary medicine.

THE MECHANISM OF ACTION OF BENZODIAZEPINES
It is currently believed that the mechanism of action of

* This paper is dedicated to Professor Dr. K. Ammann on the occasion of his 80th birthday.
Figure 2.1 Formulae of benzodiazepines used in animals.