



Texas Cattle Trichomoniasis

What is Cattle Trichomoniasis?

Cattle Trichomoniasis or “Trich” is a venereal disease of cattle caused by the organism *Tritrichomonas*. Infected bulls carry the organism on the surface of their penis and prepuce. They physically transmit the organism to female cattle during the breeding process. Affected species include all dairy, beef animals and bison.

Unlike bulls, most female cattle will eventually recover from the disease. When cows are newly infected, Trich may cause the cow to abort early in the pregnancy and become temporarily infertile. Cattle producers can lose valuable income from the extended breeding seasons and diminished calf crops.

Requirements for Breeding Bulls Changing Possession in Texas (Intrastate Movement)

All Texas origin bulls sold, leased, gifted, exchanged or otherwise changing possession for breeding purposes in the State of Texas must meet the following testing or certification requirements prior to change of possession in the state:

1. Be certified as a virgin, by the breeder or his representative, on and accompanied by a breeder’s certificate of virgin status; or
2. If from a heard of unknown status, be tested negative on three consecutive culture tests conducted not less than seven days apart or one RT-PCR (Real Time Polymerase Chain Reaction) test conducted within 60 days of sale or movement, be held separate from all female cattle since the test sample was collected, and be accompanied by a Trichomoniasis test record showing the negative test.

Identification of Bulls

All breeding bulls changing possession must be officially identified. Bulls certified as virgin bulls, must be identified by an official identification device or method on the breeder’s certification of virgin status. All bulls tested for Trichomoniasis must be officially identified at the time the initial test sample is collected. That official identification must be recorded on the test documents.

- Official Identification (ID) devices approved by the Texas Animal Health Commission (TAHC) include the following:
- Official USDA alpha-numeric metal ear tag (silver bangs tag)
- Official 840 radio frequency identification device (RFID)
- Official 840 bangle tag
- Official breed registry tattoo
- Official breed registry individual animal brands

Certification as Virgin Bulls

Virgin bulls are sexually intact male cattle which have not serviced a cow and which are not more than 18 months of age as determined by the loss of the first pair of temporary incisor teeth (commonly known as baby teeth); or not more than 30 months of age if a veterinarian will co-sign a statement along with the owner, stating the bull has not been in contact with female cattle. The virgin certificate by

the breeder or vet is valid for 60 days, provided the bull is isolated from female cattle at all times, and may be transferred within that timeframe with an original signature of the consignor. Virgin bulls are not required to be tested upon change of ownership.

Trichomoniasis Positive Bull(s)

Bulls that are determined to be infected will be placed under hold order along with all other non-virgin bulls in the bull herd. Infected bulls and exposed bulls must be isolated from all female cattle from the time of diagnosis until final release or as directed by the TAHC. Bulls on adjacent pastures to where an infected bull was disclosed are required to be tested.

Breeding bulls that are identified as reactors may be retested provided the TAHC Regional Director is contacted, retests are conducted within 30 days after the date of the original test, test samples for retest are submitted to a TAHC approved laboratory for testing, and the positive bull is quarantined along with all other exposed bulls on the premises. Bulls that are retested must have two negative RT-PCR tests to be released from quarantine.

Positive bulls may be moved directly to slaughter or to a livestock market for sale directly to slaughter. Positive and exposed bulls must be individually officially identified and listed on a TAHC issued movement permit, which authorizes shipment from the ranch to the market and from the market to the slaughter facility, or from the ranch directly to the slaughter facility. Movement to slaughter must occur within 30 days of positive or confirmatory test results or as directed by the TAHC.

All bulls in a herd where one or more bulls have been found to be infected will be placed under hold order and must be held in isolation from female cattle until the bulls have undergone at least two additional culture tests with negative results (not less than a total of three negative culture tests) or a total of two negative RT-PCR tests within 60 days of the initial test, unless otherwise instructed. All bulls negative to all three culture tests or both RT-PCR tests will be classified as negative and released for breeding.

Quarantined herds with breeding bulls that tested negative on the initial test may be maintained with the herd if the owner or caretaker develops a Trich herd control plan with a Trichomoniasis certified veterinarian. The Trich herd control plan requires bulls to be officially Trich tested annually and includes other best management practices to control, eliminate, and prevent the spread of Trichomoniasis. Unless otherwise approved or disapproved by the commission, the plan expires three years from the date the plan is signed by the owner or caretaker and authorized veterinarian.

When Trichomoniasis is diagnosed in female cattle or fetal tissue, all breeding bulls associated with the herd will be restricted under a hold order pending required test procedures as above.

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Untested Bull(s)

Bulls presented for sale without a breeder's certification of virgin status or a Trichomoniasis test record showing negative test results may be sold for movement only directly to slaughter or be sold for movement to an approved feedlot and then moved to slaughter or transported back to a livestock market under permit, issued by commission personnel.

Another option for sale of an unknown status bull allows its movement under a Hold Order to a place specified by the commission for testing to change status from a slaughter bull. Such bulls must be officially, individually identified with a permanent form of identification prior to movement, move to the designated location where the bull will undergo three consecutive culture tests at least seven days apart or one RT-PCR test. If the results are positive, all bulls in the herd of origin of the positive bull will be placed under hold order and tested. The positive bull will then be classified as infected and be permitted for movement only directly to slaughter or to a livestock market for sale directly to slaughter.

The final option for the sale of an unknown status bull allows its movement to another physical location under permit issued by TAHC personnel, and then to a livestock market or location to be resold within seven days from the date of issuance. Such bulls must be officially, individually identified with a permanent form of identification prior to movement and the bull cannot be commingled with female cattle during the seven days.

Texas Herd Certification Program

The owner of all non-virgin breeding bulls will sign an agreement with the TAHC and will have bulls tested annually for three consecutive years. During this time, all non-virgin breeding bulls leaving the herd will be tested for Trich within 30 days before being sold, leased, exchanged or otherwise changing possession. The test must be completed and results known prior to the bull being physically transferred to the receiving premises or herd. All bulls must be identified with an official ID.

All bulls being moved to slaughter during the first three years must be tested for Trich. Testing can be done at the slaughter facility if arrangements have been made with the veterinarian and the slaughter facility before movement.

Female cattle added to a certified herd cannot originate from a known Trich infected herd and must originate from either a certified free herd or meet one of the following categories:

- Calf at side and exposure to ONLY negative Trich tested bulls. Checked by an accredited veterinarian, at least 120 days pregnant and so recorded or a virgin.
- Heifers exposed as virgins only to known negative Trich bulls and not yet 120 days pregnant.

Records must be maintained for all tests including all non-virgin bulls entering the herd and made available for inspection by a certified veterinarian or by the TAHC. All non-virgin bulls must be tested for Trich every two years thereafter to maintain certification status.

The TAHC may develop a commuter herd plan for producers who send their Texas bulls out of state for the breeding of their own cows for a breeding season and returned to Texas. This plan would allow producers to test annually in Texas prior to leaving for the other state (bulls must meet receiving states requirements for entry). These bulls would be allowed to re-enter Texas without a test as long as they are tested annually and have been isolated from cows owned by other producers.

Requirements for Breeding Bulls Entering Texas (Interstate Movement)

All Breeding Bulls

Breeding bulls more than 12 months old entering Texas from another state must have a Certificate of Veterinary Inspection (CVI) and a negative RT-PCR Trich test within 60 days before entry; unless the bull is 18 months of age or younger and accompanied by a commission or any state approved Trichomoniasis virgin status certificate and a CVI that includes a statement reflecting the bulls virgin status. Non-virgin, untested breeding bulls may enter Texas directly to slaughter or enter with a USDA VS Form 1-27 direct to a feed-yard that has entered into a Trichomoniasis Certified Facility Agreement for cattle destined for slaughter. All breeding bulls must be officially identified before entry.

Bulls Entering Texas for Shows, Fairs and Rodeos

Bulls more than 12 months of age and capable of breeding, that enter Texas for the purpose of participating at fairs, shows, exhibitions, and/ or rodeos, may enter the state without testing for Trichomoniasis, if the following conditions are met:

Bulls must enter on a permit issued by the TAHC prior to entry and have the permit number recorded on the CVI; Bulls permitted for entry into Texas will not be commingled with female cattle or used for breeding; Bulls that remain in the state more than 60 days must be tested negative for Trichomoniasis with an official Trich test.

Bulls Entering Texas from Canada or Mexico

All breeding bulls entering Texas from Canada or Mexico or from any other country that does not have an established Trichomoniasis testing program, must enter the state with a permit that is issued before entry, by the TAHC, to the place of destination in Texas and remain under hold order until tested negative for Trichomoniasis with an official Trich test within 30 days after entry into the state.

All bulls must be maintained separate from female cattle until post entry testing requirements have been completed. All bulls tested for Trichomoniasis must be identified by an official identification device or comparable method at the time the first test sample is collected. The identification should be recorded on the test documents.

For More Information

Producers with infected herds should work with their veterinarian to determine the most appropriate measures to eliminate the disease from their cow herds. TAHC personnel are available to discuss Trichomoniasis and the Texas Trich Control Program with individuals, groups or associations. For more information, call your TAHC region office or the Austin headquarters at 1-800-550-8242, or visit http://www.tahc.texas.gov/animal_health/trich/trich.html