



Cattle Trichomoniasis

What is Cattle Trichomoniasis?

Cattle Trichomoniasis or “Trich” is a venereal disease of cattle caused by the organism *Tritrichomonas foetus*. 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.

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 within 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 the bull comes from a herd of unknown status, it must be held separate from all female cattle until it tests negative on three consecutive culture tests conducted no less than seven days apart, or one RT-PCR (Real Time Polymerase Chain Reaction) test or one Direct Sample qPCR test conducted within 60 days of sale or movement. A Trich test record with negative test results must accompany the bull.

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 and 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 that have not serviced a cow and not more than 18 months of age as determined by the eruption of the two permanent central incisors or birth date on breed registry papers certified by the breeder; or not more than 30 months of age and certified by both the breeder based on birth date and confirmed by the veterinarian that the bull facility is sufficient to prevent contact with female cattle. The virgin certificate by the breeder 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)

Trich Infected Bulls will be placed under hold order along with all 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 infected bulls 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. In order to move, 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 the positive or confirmatory test results or as directed by the TAHC.

All bulls in a herd where one or more bull has 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.

Breeding bulls that are a part of a quarantined herd or a herd that is under a hold order and test negative to the first official Trichomoniasis test may be maintained with the herd if the owner or caretaker of the bulls develops a Trichomoniasis herd control plan with a certified veterinarian. The Trichomoniasis herd control plan will require all breeding bulls to be tested annually with an official Trich test and include other best management practices to control, eliminate and prevent the spread of Trichomoniasis. The Trich herd control plan, unless otherwise approved or disapproved by the TAHC, expires three years from the date the plan is signed by the herd owner or caretaker and the authorized veterinarian. Breeding bulls that are part of a Trichomoniasis herd control plan that expires or that is disapproved must be tested for Trichomoniasis.

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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 described above. The TAHC may waive this testing requirement if it is epidemiologically determined that testing is not required.

Untested Bull(s)

Bulls presented for sale without a breeder's certification of virgin status or a Trich 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 to slaughter, or be sold and moved under a Hold Order to such place as specified by the TAHC for testing to change status from a slaughter bull to a breeding bull. If bulls are sold and moved under Hold Order they are required to obtain official permanent individual identification prior to movement and once moved to the designated location, on a VS 1-27 permit, be held in isolation from female cattle at the designated location until the bull can undergo one RT-PCR or qPCR test. If the test results are positive, the bull will be classified as infected and be permitted for movement directly to slaughter or to a 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 on prior to movement and the bull cannot be commingled with female cattle during the seven days.

Herd Certification Program For Breeding Bulls

Herd owners who enroll in the Trichomoniasis Herd Certification Program will sign an agreement with the TAHC to have all non-virgin breeding bulls tested annually for three consecutive years. During this time, all non-virgin breeding bulls being sold, leased, exchanged or otherwise changing possession must be tested for Trich within 30 days before movement. The test must be completed and results known before 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. The test may be performed at a slaughter facility if a certified veterinarian and the slaughter facility management makes an arrangement before the animal arrives.

Female cattle cannot be added to a certified herd if they originate from a known Trich infected herd. Cattle must originate from a certified herd or qualify for one of the following categories: Calf at side and exposure to ONLY negative Trich tested bulls; or checked by an accredited veterinarian, at least 120 days pregnant and so recorded; or a virgin; or heifers exposed as virgins to only 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 after the three year inception period to maintain certification status. Herd premises must have perimeter fencing adequate to prevent ingress or egress of cattle.

The TAHC may develop a commuter herd plan for producers who send their Texas bulls out of state for the breeding season and return 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 & Cattle Entering Texas (Interstate Movement)

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 official Trich test within 60 days before entry.

Non-virgin, untested bulls may enter Texas directly to slaughter, a feed-yard that has entered into a Trich Certified Facility Agreement for cattle destined for slaughter, or a federally approved livestock market accompanied by a permit from the TAHC. A CVI must accompany the untested bulls that includes the entry permit number and a statement that the bull must be Trich tested or sold for slaughter. All breeding bulls must be officially identified before entry.

Female Cattle

Female cattle may not enter Texas if they originate from a known Trichomoniasis positive herd or are exposed to a known Trichomoniasis positive bull unless the animal is officially identified, obtains a TAHC issued permit, is moved directly to an approved slaughtering establishment, and is accompanied by a CVI stating the animal is Trich exposed.

Bulls Entering Texas for Shows, Fairs and Rodeos

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

Bulls must be identified by an official identification device, have a permit issued by the TAHC prior to entering Texas, and have the permit number recorded on their CVI. Bulls permitted for entry must not be commingled with female cattle or used for breeding. Bulls that remain in Texas for more than 60 days must test negative for Trichomoniasis with an official Trich test.

Bulls Entering Texas from Canada or Mexico

All breeding bulls entering Texas from Canada, Mexico, or from any other country that does not have an established Trich testing program must have a permit issued by the TAHC before entry 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 entering Texas. All bulls must be kept separate from female cattle until the testing requirements have been completed. All bulls tested for Trich, 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 or CVI.