



# Texas Cattle Trichomoniasis Regulations

- Interstate regulations effective April 1, 2009
- Intrastate regulations effective Jan. 1, 2010

Texas Animal Health Commission (TAHC)  
<http://www.tahc.state.tx.us>

## Cattle Trichomoniasis: Herd Productivity Thief

Cattle trichomoniasis (trick-o-mun-eye-i-sis) is a venereal disease of cattle caused by the *Trichomonas foetus* protozoa, which is about the size of a sperm. Infected bulls carry the protozoan on their penis and prepuce, and as the bull ages, the conditions on the surface of the organs become more favorable for the organism to thrive.

Trichomoniasis, or “trich,” is transmitted to cows through breeding. Cows may abort early in the pregnancy and become temporary infertile. Cattle producers can lose valuable income from the resulting extended breeding seasons and diminished calf crops.

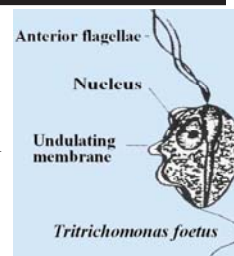
*You can't tell by looking!* Infected breeding bulls continue to appear and act normally. Only testing will confirm the presence or absence of the disease-causing protozoa. Once infected, bulls remain infected and capable of spreading infection. No approved treatment or vaccine exists for bulls.

On the other hand, the majority of infected cows will clear the infection, if given 120 – 150 days of sexual rest. A vaccine also can be administered to cows to help manage the disease.

Producers with infected herds should work with their veterinarian to determine the most appropriate measures to employ to eliminate the disease from their cow herds.

TAHC personnel are available to discuss cattle trichomoniasis and the Texas program with individuals, groups and associations. To request a TAHC speaker, call your area TAHC office or the Austin headquarters at 800-550-8242, ext 710.

More information on management of the disease can be obtained from Texas A&M University's College of Veterinary Medicine, Texas AgriLife Extension, Texas Veterinary Medical Diagnostic Laboratory, or the TAHC.



## Texas' Cattle Trichomoniasis Program

### Texas' Two-Pronged Program

Requirements  
for breeding bulls  
entering Texas  
effective  
April 1, 2009

Requirements  
for breeding bulls  
changing possession  
in Texas  
effective Jan 1, 2010

Fifteen other states in the western part of the United States have developed “trich”

regulations to address the disease in their states. At least two more states are developing trichomoniasis programs.

Similarly, the cattle industry and trade associations in Texas requested that the Texas Animal Health Commission develop regulations to stop the introduction and unchecked spread of this protozoal disease.

The TAHC developed a working group of producers, market operators, veterinarians, laboratory representatives and educators to gather information, develop the proposed regulations, and following the conclusion of the comment

period, considered all comments to develop a viable, cost-effective program.

Although the primary impact of trichomoniasis is on female cattle, and female cattle can spread trich to bulls, Texas' trich regulations will focus on breeding bulls, which are the reservoir for the disease.

Under the program, trichomoniasis is a reportable disease in Texas, which will allow disease information to be collected by the Texas Animal Health Commission on where and how much infection is in the state.

The first of the two phases of regulations, effective April 1, 2009, are directed toward breeding bulls entering Texas from other states. The second phase will begin on January 1, 2010, when rules for breeding bulls changing possession in Texas will go into effect.

On an annual basis, the Texas Trichomoniasis Program will be reviewed by an industry-agency working group to determine changes needed, or if the program should be continued.

## **Requirements for breeding bulls entering Texas (Interstate Movement)**

Beginning April 1, 2009, breeding bulls entering Texas from any other state must be 24 months of age or younger and certified as a virgin (provided they have not commingled with female cattle), **OR** be tested negative for cattle trichomoniasis within 30 days prior to entry. Non-virgin, untested breeding bulls may enter Texas for sale to slaughter **ONLY**.

- official 840 radio frequency identification device (RFID)
- official 840 flap or bangle tag
- official individual animal breed registry brand
- official individual animal breed registry tattoo
- official state of origin trich tag

A breeder's certificate, with the animal's age, identification and breeder's signature, must accompany the virgin breeding bull. The bull's virgin status information, age and ID also must be included on the certificate of veterinary inspection, issued within 30 days prior to entering Texas.

The bull's age can be determined by breed registry papers with the animal's date of birth, or by examining the animal's teeth. An animal is at least 24 months old if both permanent central incisor teeth are present and in wear.

Breeding bulls must be officially identified prior to entry. Acceptable identification (ID) devices include:

- brucellosis ear tag

### **Non-virgin or older breeding bulls...**

Non-virgin breeding bulls or bulls older than 24 months of age entering Texas must be tested negative for trichomoniasis within the 30 days prior to entry on one PCR test, OR on three consecutive, official culture tests, each conducted not less than one week apart. During the trichomoniasis testing and prior to shipment to Texas, the bulls must have no contact with female cattle. The bulls also must be officially identified.

When entering Texas, the tested bulls must be accompanied by a completed trichomoniasis test document and a certificate of veterinarian inspection, issued within 30 days prior to movement, on which trichomoniasis test results and ID also are recorded.

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## **Requirements for Breeding Bulls Changing Possession in Texas, Effective Jan. 1, 2010 (Intrastate Movement)**

The second phase of the Texas Cattle Trichomoniasis Program will begin January 1, 2010, and will require that Texas breeding bulls offered for **sale, lease, exchange or otherwise changing possession for breeding** within the state be certified as virgin bulls or be tested negative prior to selling, loaning, exchanging, giving or otherwise changing the possession of a breeding bull. (No test or certification is required for bulls shipped or sold directly to slaughter.)

The delay until January 2010 provides time to certify veterinarians to perform all components of the Texas trichomoniasis program, and to ensure producers are familiar with the disease, its implication to herd health, and requirements for testing or certifying the virgin status of Texas breeding bulls undergoing change of possession.

### **Identification...**

All breeding bulls changing possession must be identified. A list of approved ID devices is on the previous page.

### **Certification as virgin bulls...**

The breeder may certify breeding bulls as virgins until the animals are 24 months old, as indicated by the presence of the animal's two permanent central incisors in wear, or more simply, by the birth date recorded on the animals' breed registry papers. **The bull's virgin status can be extended to 30 months**, provided the breeder and the herd's accredited veterinarian certify on a breeder's certificate that the facility and herd management practices are sufficient to prevent contact with female cattle. The bull's ID also must be recorded.

### **Non-virgin or older breeding bulls...**

Non-virgin or older breeding bulls changing possession in Texas must be tested negative on one RT-PCR (Real Time Polymerase Chain Reaction test), or negative on three consecutive culture tests, each conducted at least

seven days apart. The bulls must remain apart from female cattle during testing. The test results (as shown on the trichomoniasis testing document required for change of possession) are valid for 30 days prior to change of possession, but **ONLY** if the bulls remain separate from female cattle.

Samples for trichomoniasis testing must be collected by trichomoniasis certified, accredited veterinarians. Official tests will be run at the Texas Veterinary Medical Diagnostic Laboratory (TVMDL). Payment for sample collection and laboratory costs will be the responsibility of the producer.

### **Positive bull?**

A positive test indicates an infected bull. A confirmatory RT-PCR test may be run, provided the owner or herd's certified, accredited veterinarian makes the request to the TAHC within five days of the positive test.

Infected bulls will be restricted to movement for slaughter only. The infected bulls are to be moved to slaughter within 30 days of confirmation, as there is no effective treatment for this disease.

The remaining bulls in the herd will be held, isolated from female cattle, until they have not less than two consecutive negative RT-PCR tests, each conducted at least seven days apart, or three consecutive negative culture tests, with each of the tests conducted at least seven days apart. When they are confirmed negative for trichomoniasis, the remaining bulls are free to move or to be commingled with cows.

### **Untested bulls...**

Bulls not certified as virgins or older breeding bulls that are untested may be sold only to slaughter. Alternatively they may be identified and moved under hold order and movement permit to a site specified by the TAHC, isolated from female cattle, and undergo testing.