

## TRICHOMONIASIS

Few economic challenges discourage cattle producers more than a reduced calf crop and lower weaning weights. One cause of longer calving seasons and open cows is trichomoniasis, commonly referred to as “trich”. Trichomoniasis is a highly contagious sexually transmitted disease in cattle that result in abortions and infertility. The only way to confirm the trichomoniasis infection is by testing with a procedure approved by the Utah Department of Agriculture and Food.

Infected bulls and cows typically act and look normal. Usually, cattle producers become aware of a problem when cows are pregnancy checked and there are too many open cows, a prolonged calving period, or noticeably reduced calf crop. The disease is spread throughout the herd when infected bulls mate with multiple cows. Abortion or re-absorption of the fetus usually occurs early in pregnancy and cows become temporarily infertile. Late term abortions have been reported, but are not common. Most infected cows will clear a trichomoniasis infection within four to five months of sexual rest, but immunity is usually short lived.

Although bulls usually pick up trichomoniasis from infected cows, Utah trichomoniasis regulations center on bulls. Bulls act as a reservoir for this organism and are the primary method of transmission. The most effective way to control trichomoniasis is to prevent the introduction of the organism into a herd. This is primarily accomplished by testing all bulls prior to the beginning of the breeding season. Identification of infected bulls is critical. Artificial insemination of cows is another way of preventing the disease from entering the breeding herd.

Utah Administrative Code, Rule R58-21, outlines the details of trichomoniasis testing required of all Utah cattle producers. All bulls twelve months of age and older, residing in Utah or entering Utah, must be tested with an approved test for trichomoniasis by an accredited veterinarian. This test must be done annually, between October 1 and April 30, or prior to exposure to female cattle. This rule applies to all bulls regardless of ownership or change of ownership. All bulls must be classified as a negative bull prior to exposure to female cattle or offered for sale. All Utah bulls, that are tested, shall be tagged in the right ear with an official tag by the certified veterinarian performing the test. Bulls which bear a current trichomoniasis test tag from another state which has an official trichomoniasis testing program will be acceptable to the State of Utah providing that they meet all Utah testing requirements. Bulls kept in confinement operations, going direct to slaughter, or to a qualified feedlot are exempted. Rodeo bulls and bulls attending livestock shows are also exempted, unless they have access to grazing or are exposed to female cattle.

All bulls testing positive for trichomoniasis must be reported within 48 hours to the owner and the State Veterinarian by the certified veterinarian performing the test. The owner is required to notify the administrators of any common grazing allotment and any neighboring cattleman within ten days following such notification by the certified veterinarian. All trichomoniasis positive bulls must be sent by direct movement (within 14 days) to slaughter, a qualified feedlot for feeding and slaughter or to an approved auction market for sale to one of the above facilities. Such bulls must move only when accompanied by a VS 1-27 Form issued by the testing veterinarian or other regulatory official. Positive

bulls entering a qualified feedlot, or approved auction market shall be identified with a lazy V brand on the left side of the tailhead by either the livestock inspector or the contract veterinarian. Said brand indicates that the bull is infected with trichomoniasis and must be slaughtered. All bulls from positive herds are required to have one additional individual negative test prior to exposure to female cattle, unless they are being sent to slaughter, to a qualified feedlot, or being fed for slaughter in a confinement operation.

Any person who fails to satisfy the requirements of this rule, or knowingly sells animals infected with trichomoniasis, other than to slaughter, will be fined \$200.00 per violation. Owners of untested bulls that have been exposed to female cattle will be fined \$200.00 per violation regardless of the time of year. Any bull which has strayed and commingles with female cattle may be required to be tested (or re-tested) for trichomoniasis. The owner of the offending bull shall bear all costs for the official test, or re-test. Bulls kept in confinement operations, such as dairies, are not subject to these rules.