



Bovine Trichomonosis

California Update

Bovine trichomonosis is a highly contagious venereal disease of cattle caused by the protozoa *Tritrichomonas foetus*. The organism lives in microscopic folds, or crypts of the skin of penis and prepuce of bulls and colonizes the reproductive tract of cows. It causes abortion and extended calving seasons. While cows can clear the infection, bulls remain persistently infected and spread infection during natural service.

California's Trichomonosis Program

Trichomonosis is a serious economic threat to California's cattle herds. The livestock industry sponsored legislation to develop a trichomonosis control program and the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) developed regulations that became effective in 2003. New laws strengthened the program in 2007, and the Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) test was added in 2011. Additional changes to the program went into effect in 2017, including requiring individual PCR for certain testing, addressing non-virgin bulls less than 18 months of age, and utilizing "trichomonosis approved eartags".



Between Oct. 1, 2020 - Sept. 30, 2021, a total of 11,438 bulls were tested. Of those 19 bulls tested positive and originated from 3 affected premises.

Standardization Sampling and Testing

Sample quality and testing are critical for diagnosing and controlling trichomonosis. Current laws require biennial training and approval for veterinarians collecting trichomonosis samples, and for laboratories processing samples, as diagnostics can be affected by sample contamination or shipping temperature.

Requirements for Bulls Entering California

All bulls 18 months of age and over, and non-virgin bulls less than 18 months of age, require a permit, health certificate with a statement that trichomonosis has not been diagnosed in the herd of origin within the past 24 months, official ID, and a negative individual PCR trichomonosis test within 60 days prior to entry. The sample for testing has to be collected after 10 days without contact with sexually mature female cattle.

Exemptions from testing include:

- Bulls going directly to slaughter, or to a feedlot for feeding (no grazing or exposure to female cattle) and then to slaughter
- Bulls used only for artificial insemination that meet Certified Semen Services standards
- Bulls used only for exhibition and not commingling with breeding cattle

Requirements for Bulls Sold in California

Bulls 18 months of age and older, and non-virgin bulls less than 18 months of age, changing ownership in California require a negative PCR trichomonosis test within 60 days before the sale. The sample for testing has to be collected after 10 days without contact with sexually mature female cattle.

Exemption from testing include:

- Bulls going directly to slaughter, or to a feedlot for feeding (no grazing or exposure to female cattle) and then to slaughter
- Bulls used only for artificial insemination that meet Certified Semen Services standards
- Bulls sold to a buyer with a current Bull Slaughter Agreement

Signs are placed at sale yards informing producers that: *"Non-virgin bulls less than 18 months of age and all bulls 18 month of age and over sold for breeding must have a negative trichomonosis test or be consigned as slaughter only."*



Reporting and Investigating Trichomonosis Cases

Trichomonosis is a reportable disease. Veterinarians, laboratories, or owners must report cases of trichomonosis to CDFA **within two days** of a diagnosis. Negative tests must be reported to CDFA within 30 days.

CDFA personnel investigate trichomonosis cases, notify owners of potentially exposed cattle, and quarantine bulls in affected and exposed herds.

- Infected bulls will be quarantined and may **only be sold for slaughter.**
- One (or two for some herds) negative individual real-time PCR test at the owner's expense is required for all herd-mate bulls, and bulls in exposed herds

http://www.cdfa.ca.gov/AHFSS/Animal_Health/Trichomonosis_Info.html

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