



Oklahoma Department of Agriculture Food & Forestry

Animal Industry Division
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BOVINE TRICHOMONIASIS Q & A

Trichomoniasis is a highly contagious venereal disease of cattle. In an effort to protect Oklahoma cattlemen and the Oklahoma cattle industry, the Oklahoma Department of Agriculture, Food & Forestry passed Administrative Rules requiring testing of breeding bulls that change ownership or management within Oklahoma that took effect January 1, 2011. New Administrative Rules become effective November 2016 that regulate the way female cattle exposed to Trichomoniasis positive bulls can be sold. The following are answers to some of the common concerns voiced by Oklahoma beef producers.

Q) What bulls are required to be tested?

A) Any bull over 12 months of age that is changing ownership. Exceptions are:

- Bulls sold for slaughter only
- Bulls that are fed at a commercial feed lot for slaughter only
- Virgin bulls less than 24 months of age

Q) Do I have to castrate my male calves before I market them?

A) No. The law applies only to bulls over 1 year of age.

Q) Will I have to have my cull bulls tested before I take them to the sale barn?

A) Not necessarily. Most cull bulls go to slaughter and these bulls are exempt from testing. If you wish to offer your bull as being ready to go back to another breeding operation, however, you may want to consider having him tested before consigning him to sell.

Q) Why does this new law not include testing for cows?

A) Cows usually clear the infection on their own if not re-contaminated by infected bulls. In addition, the test is not very reliable in cows and requires multiple tests in order to be trustworthy. Your best option is to purchase new female herd additions from reputable breeders who can provide evidence that they are not having a Trich problem.

Q) If my bull tests positive, what can I do to clear the infection?

A) Nothing. Most bulls, especially those past 3 years of age, are carriers for life if they acquire the infection and will spread it to 80 to 90% of the cows they breed.

Q) What should I do if I have a bull that tests positive?

A) With Trich, even one positive test indicates that the organism is present in your herd. This is not necessarily an insurmountable problem and the sooner it is detected the easier it is to resolve. There are management tools available to help resolve the problem, and your local veterinarian is best positioned to help you outline a program for your operation.

Q) Can I collect and submit my own samples?

A) No. For regulatory purposes the sample must be collected and submitted by a licensed veterinarian who has received specific training and certification to do the collection correctly. The Oklahoma Department of Agriculture has provided this training and certification to food animal practitioners across the state.

Q) What do I need to do if I purchase a bull at my local auction that is not tested?

A) Under the law you can have your newly purchased bull tested at the sale barn by the sale veterinarian and then take him home under a special quarantine. You must agree to isolate him from breeding animals until the test results are known (usually 7 to 10 days) and to sell him for “slaughter only” if he tests positive. You should seek clarification from the market operator or sale veterinarian before bidding on untested bulls.

Q) If I buy and feed cutter bulls what does this new law mean to me?

A) The law contains an exemption for cutter bulls that are purchased for feeding only and not allowed exposure to females. These bulls must be fed at a commercial feed lot. Visit with your market operator or sale veterinarian for clarification on this exemption.

Q) Is testing required if I buy, sell, or lease a bull through a private treaty transaction?

A) Yes. A negative test is required by law any time a breeding bull changes ownership or management within the state of Oklahoma, or enters from another state.

Q) Are female cattle affected by the State Regulations?

A) Yes. Female cattle that have been exposed to a known positive bull can **ONLY** be sold if:

- They have been diagnosed at least four months pregnant by an accredited veterinarian
- They are sold for slaughter only
- They are fed at a commercial feedlot to be fed for slaughter only
- They have a calf less than 30 days old and have not been exposed to a bull since calving
- They have not been exposed to a bull in the past six months

Q) Where should I go for more information?

A) Your local veterinarian should always be your first source of information on any health related issues. Other sources of information concerning the new testing regulations are the Oklahoma Department of Agriculture, Animal Industry Services, and your county OSU Extension Office.