

State Law On Bull Testing Goes Into Effect Sept. 1

NOVELTY, MO.

A new state animal health law affecting movement of bulls within Missouri takes effect on Sept. 1.

After that, breeding bulls must be tested for trichomoniasis, or trich, before changing ownership or possession. A similar law already exists for breeding bulls coming into state.

Dr. Craig Payne, University of Missouri Extension veterinarian, explained the new rules at the MU Greenley Center field day at Novelty, Mo., Aug. 9.

The bull-testing program aims to find and eradicate trich, a sexually transmitted disease in cow herds.

So far the disease has been found in herds in more than 30 Missouri counties. There is no cure for infected bulls, Payne told visitors on the beef tour.

The venereal disease has caused 40 to 70 percent losses of pregnancies in some Missouri cow herds, Payne said. "At today's calf prices, that is a significant financial loss. Some farms did not survive that loss.

"There are not only lost calves, but there are losses from aggressive culling of infected bulls and open cows," he said. "That causes financial hardship."

Because there is no treatment for the disease and vaccines are not 100 percent effective, prevention is the key, he said. Since bulls transmit the disease, the new rules focus on them.

Under the rules, any nonvirgin bulls or bulls 24 months of age or older being sold at livestock auctions must be tested if they are not going to slaughter.

Similarly, nonvirgin bulls or bulls 30 months of age or older that are sold at private treaty, leased, traded or bartered must have a negative trich test within 30 days prior to change of ownership or possession.

"The discrepancy in age of bulls being sold at livestock markets and those sold at private treaty – 24 months vs. 30 months – is temporary," Payne said. "The state veterinary office reports the age of bulls to be tested when being sold at private treaty will change from 30 to 24 months in November."

A state map prepared by Dr. Linda Hickam, a state veterinarian, shows most counties with infected herds are in southwestern Missouri.

While only three counties north of the Missouri River are on the map, Payne said he expects to see more added when required testing starts.

Under the new rules, any bull that tests positive for trich must be sent directly to slaughter. The herd from which the bull came will have additional restrictions to follow.

Other beef speakers at the Greenley field day were Justin Sexten, MU Extension beef nutritionist, Columbia; and Zac Erwin, extension regional livestock specialist, Monticello. Sexten talked on grass management. Erwin told of harm from heat stress.

Visitors also went on crop and pest management tours. The field day was the first of the annual events held at research centers across the state.

Payne will speak next at the Missouri Beef Tour, Aug. 27, starting at 12:20 p.m., Whitesville, Mo. △



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