

# Trichomoniasis Cases Continue To Rise In Arkansas

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A total of 97 cases of Trichomoniasis were reported in Arkansas during 2011. That number had been increasing steadily since new regulations were set in place last year, indicating that any breeding bull changing ownership in Arkansas must be accompanied by a negative test for trichomoniasis. The new regulations only exempt bulls that are going directly for slaughter, bulls accompanied by an Arkansas Virgin Bull Affidavit (virgin bulls under 24 months of age), or bulls sold for feeding and slaughter. Similar regulations have recently been adopted by other states across the U.S. to target the control of this disease in cattle.

Trichomoniasis, commonly referred to as "trich," is a venereal disease of cattle caused by the protozoa organism *Tritrichomonas foetus*. The disease leads to infertility, poor pregnancy rates, an extended breeding season and a diminished calf crop in cattle, which is very costly to producers. Trich is transmitted from an infected bull to the cow's reproductive tract during breeding. Infected cows will experience infertility and early embryonic death, causing the cow to return to estrus (heat) and subsequently leading to poor pregnancy rates and an extended breeding season. Trichomoniasis causes very few outward signs of illness in infected bulls and infertility in cows may go unnoticed, allowing it to be present for a considerable time before it is suspected and diagnosed. Most bulls (especially bulls over 4 years of age), once infected, will stay infected for life. Currently, there is no approved treatment for breeding bulls in the U.S.; therefore, infected bulls must be condemned to slaughter. The majority of infected cows will clear the infection if given 120 to 150 days of sexual rest.

Testing for trichomoniasis can be performed

by your veterinarian, and testing can be easily accomplished in your herd bulls when performed in conjunction with a breeding soundness exam.

Two weeks of breeding rest is recommended before a bull is tested. This allows the infectious organisms time to build up to a detectible level. A testing sample is collected by scraping the inside of the preputial sheath; it is then placed into special growth media and shipped to a laboratory. Results can be expected in about seven days. Trichomoniasis is a reportable disease in Arkansas, and any bulls testing positive will be sent to slaughter within two weeks.

A current list of regulations regarding trichomoniasis in Arkansas can be found at the Arkansas Livestock and Poultry Commission web site <http://alpc.arkansas.gov/>

Cattlemen can be proactive to protect their herds from becoming exposed to trichomoniasis by following these recommendations:

- When purchasing bulls, purchase virgin bulls if possible.
- Keep fences in good repair to prevent accidental contact with potentially infected cattle. Monitor traffic in and out of the herd.
- When purchasing female replacements purchase virgin heifers and/or mature cows from a reputable source.
- If you suspect a disease issue in your herd, test your current bull battery for trichomoniasis. Any positive bulls should be culled and sold for slaughter.
- Maintain a defined breeding season and perform a pregnancy check in a timely manner afterwards to identify a potential problem early. Keep good records of a herd's reproductive efficiency, and use these to help identify a possible problem

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