

# Trichomoniasis and What you, as a Vet, Need to Know

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**Region 7 Director**



Cattle Trichomoniasis, known as "Trich," is a venereal disease of cattle caused by the *Trichomonas foetus* protozoa, which is about the size of a sperm. Infected bulls carry the organism on their penis and prepuce. Trichomoniasis is then transmitted to cows through breeding. Cows may abort early in the pregnancy and become temporarily infertile. Only testing will confirm the presence or absence of the disease.

Cattle producers can lose valuable income from the extended breeding seasons and diminished calf crops caused by this disease. The cattle industry and trade associations in Texas requested that the Texas Animal Health Commission develop regulations to stop the introduction and spread of this disease.

The Texas Animal Health Commission (TAHC) adopted revisions to Texas' cattle Trich program during the quarterly Commission Meeting on October 5, 2010. <sup>1</sup> Fall and with that comes an increase in trail rides, stock shows, rodeos, and other equine related events. Current Texas Animal Health Commission (TAHC) regulations require owners to have a current (within the previous 12 months) Equine Infectious Anemia (EIA, aka Coggins) test on all equine that are sold or co-mingled with other equine at events, exhibitions, public stables, or other assemblies.

## **Revisions to the current regulations are:**

- A negative cattle trichomoniasis test will now be valid for 60 days provided that the bull is kept separate from female cattle during that time. Additionally, the test may be transferred within that time frame with the original signature of the consignor.
- A virgin certificate is now valid for 60 days provided that the bull is kept separate from female cattle. A virgin certificate may now also be transferred within that timeframe with the original signature of the consignor.
- Revised entry requirements now exempt out-of-state breeding bulls from an entry trichomoniasis test, if they come from a Certified Semen Service (CSS) artificial insemination facility, where they are isolated from female cattle. The bulls must be accompanied by documents with an original signature by the veterinarian or manager of the facility.
- Revised regulations now allow untested, non-virgin Texas bulls to be sold and moved to a trichomoniasis certified feedlot prior to slaughter. Under previous regulations, untested, non-virgin bulls were allowed to be sold only for direct movement to slaughter. This change does not apply to non-Texas origin bulls. Producers may also still purchase untested bulls for movement under a TAHC-issued hold order /permit to a location away from female cattle, where the bull is to be tested for Trich.

The TAHC recently adopted changes to its cattle Trichomoniasis (Trich) rules August 14, 2011.

**The following is an overview of rule changes for the Texas cattle Trichomoniasis program.**

- Texas will no longer accept “virgin” bulls for entry from other states. All breeding bulls more than 12 months of age shall be tested and must have a negative Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) Trich test prior to entry.
- Texas will no longer accept a negative culture test(s) for entry of breeding bulls into the state. Only PCR tests will be accepted.
- Untested *out-of-state* bulls are now allowed entry into Texas if consigned directly to Trich certified feedyard facilities, and accompanied by a permit issued by an accredited veterinarian from the state of origin.
- A “Control Herd Plan” option has been created that allows large cattle operations up to three years to eradicate Trich from their herd. The enrolled herds are allowed to test once per year (preferably prior to breeding season) instead of two or more times as normally required, but in exchange they must consult with a veterinarian and enter into a plan designed to remove the disease from the herd. In the interim, all bulls leaving the herd must be sold for slaughter or feeding for slaughter only until their quarantine is released.
- The TAHC will now allow an approved laboratory to “pool” individually submitted samples (up to 5 samples) for PCR testing, to count as one of the two tests normally required to release a herd from quarantine. Pooled samples will still not be allowed for change of ownership testing however. This change was designed as a cost saving measure for producers, and must be approved in advance by TAHC regional management in consultation with the owner or veterinarian.

Current Trich regulations are posted on the TAHC website in [English](#) as well as [Spanish](#).

I would like to remind all veterinarians involved with Trich testing program of a few major items.

- 1) A TAHC Trich Test Record must accompany samples when submitted to TVMDL for official results (**must have official ID**). Test Records are available on the [TAHC Trich web page](#).
- 2) Copies of all Test Records must be sent to your local [TAHC Regional Office](#).
- 3) Veterinarian(s) must be TAHC Trich approved to do official Trich testing. If you have not completed this approved training, contact your local TAHC Regional Office for information for approval.
- 4) If you are shipping livestock to other states or countries, [contact them to obtain requirements](#). These requirements can change from day to day.

The TAHC Trich Program has advanced significantly since its inception in 2009. If you have suggestions or recommendations, please forward to the TAHC for discussion at the next Trich Working Group Meeting.

Thanks to all practicing veterinarians, lab personnel, and producers involved with the TAHC Trich Program.

For more information, contact your [TAHC Regional Office](#).

