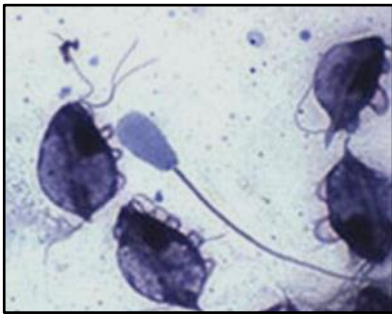




# Trichomonosis Program in California

## Information for Cattle Producers

Bovine trichomonosis is a venereal disease of cattle caused by the protozoa *Tritrichomonas foetus*. This organism lives in the skin folds of the penis and internal sheath of bulls, and colonizes the vagina, cervix, uterus, and oviducts of cows. Trichomonosis can affect all cattle, causing abortion and extended calving seasons; however, the disease is recognized more commonly in beef herds.



### Trichomonosis Regulations

Trichomonosis poses a serious economic threat to California's cattle herds. In response, the California Cattlemen's Association (CCA) and the Western United Dairymen jointly sponsored legislation to develop a program to prevent and control trichomonosis.

The CCA drafted the California Bovine Trichomonosis Control Program, and California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) prepared regulations to support the program. These laws became effective in September 2003, and were modified in October 2007 and 2011. Continuing efforts to improve the program led to additional changes that went into effect in 2017. Complete regulation text can be found in the [California Code of Regulations](#) (Title 3, Division 2, Chapter 2).

### California's Trichomonosis Program

#### Testing and Sampling

- All trichomonosis tests are official tests and bulls require official identification and a "trichomonosis approved eartag".
- A DNA detection or amplification-based trichomonosis test (e.g. PCR) is required for bulls entering California (including on Pasture-to-Pasture permits) or changing ownership, and for affected and exposed herd testing.



- A culture test can be used as a screening herd test, or in Certified Semen Services facilities.
- Bull samples should be collected after 10 days of separation from female cattle.
- Veterinarians must be trained and approved every two years to collect samples for trichomonosis.
- Laboratories must be approved to read the tests.

#### Bulls Entering CA or Changing Ownership

- Bulls 18 months of age and older, and non-virgin bulls less than 18 months of age, entering California require a negative PCR test within 60 days unless moving directly to slaughter, semen collection, or exhibition where they are not commingled with female cattle.
- Bulls entering California on a Pasture-to-Pasture permit require a negative trichomonosis test within 12 months.
- Bulls 18 months of age and older, and non-virgin bulls less than 18 months of age, changing ownership require a negative PCR test within 60 days before sale unless going directly to slaughter, semen collection, exhibition where they are not commingled with female cattle, or sold to a buyer with a current Bull Slaughter Agreement.



#### Reporting and Investigating Cases

- Veterinarians, laboratories, or owners must report positive cases to CDFA within two days of a diagnosis.
- All negative tests must be reported to CDFA within 30 days.
- CDFA will investigate cases, notify owner(s) of potentially exposed cattle and quarantine bulls in affected and exposed herds.
- Infected bulls can only be sold for slaughter.
- Bulls from affected and exposed herds require one negative PCR test to move anywhere but direct to slaughter.
- If a herd has been affected twice within 24 months, two negative PCR tests are required.

## How is trichomonosis spread?

Bulls spread trichomonosis during natural service. Bulls over four years of age are typically the main reservoir of infection in a herd. However, younger bulls and cows can be affected and spread disease. In rare cases, infection is spread during artificial insemination by contaminated insemination equipment, semen, or non-hygienic procedures.



## Signs of trichomonosis in herds\*

- Repeat breeding,
- Extended calving season,
- Early abortion (too early to find a fetus),
- Occasional late-term abortions,
- A high percentage of open cows at pregnancy exam (20-50% or more), and
- Pyometra (pus-filled uterus) in about one percent of cows.

\*Bulls **do not** show signs of trichomonosis infection.

## Can trichomonosis be treated?

There is no approved treatment, and bulls remain persistently infected. Most cows clear infection within a few months; however, a few cows may carry infection to calving, and cows with pyometra can remain persistently infected.

Additional tools to aid producers and veterinarians in developing trichomonosis control, prevention, and eradication strategies can be found at:

[www.trichconsult.org](http://www.trichconsult.org)



## Controlling trichomonosis

- Maintain a closed herd,
- Test all bulls yearly before breeding,
- Use young, virgin bulls,
- Use separate breeding groups,
- Track the movement of breeding bulls in operations with multiple locations,
- Cull positive bulls and open cows, and
- Using artificial insemination can be beneficial.
- A trichomonosis vaccine is available for cows that can serve as an aid in prevention of the disease and may reduce the incidence of early embryonic death and abortion. However, it is not labeled to prevent or clear infection in bulls.

If one or more bulls in your herd is infected, contact your veterinarian about control programs.

**Testing, culling, and vaccination can be used to help manage *Trichomonas foetus*.**



### Animal Health and Food Safety Services Animal Health Branch

Headquarters - (916) 900-5002  
Redding District - (530) 225-2140  
Modesto District - (209) 491-9350  
Tulare District - (559) 685-3500  
Ontario District - (909) 947-4462  
USDA-APHIS-VS - (916) 854-3950 or (877) 741-3690

### California Animal Health and Food Safety Laboratories

Davis - (530) 752-8700  
Tulare - (559) 688-7543  
Turlock - (209) 634-5837  
San Bernardino - (909) 383-4287

For more information on the Animal Health Branch, please visit, or scan:  
[www.cdafa.ca.gov/ah](http://www.cdafa.ca.gov/ah)

