

## WHAT IS TRICHOMONIASIS (TRICH)?

Trichomoniasis (trich) is a highly contagious, sexually transmitted disease of cattle caused by the protozoan *Tritrichomonas foetus*, which is about the size of a sperm cell.

The disease is non-invasive and can be found in microscopic folds of the bull's penis and sheath; as a bull matures, these folds deepen and are more conducive for the organism to survive or multiply. It is sexually transmitted to the cow during breeding and can be found in the cow's vagina and uterus.

Trich was added to the Kansas reportable disease list in 2010. Positive cases must be reported to the Kansas Animal Health Commissioner.

## HOW IS TRICH DETECTED & MANAGED?

Trich is physically unnoticeable in bulls; only testing can confirm the presence of the disease. Cows may experience pregnancy loss (generally 50-70 days of gestation), abortion within 5-7 months of gestation and/or infertility.

The primary herd sign is prolonged calving interval or high open rate at pregnancy checking time. Cows usually clear the infection on their own; however, immunity is short-lived, and cows are susceptible to reinfection the following season.

Bulls may be tested for the disease. After two weeks of sexual rest, a veterinarian will collect a sample from the bull's sheath, and send the sample to an approved laboratory for a real-time PCR test.

Bulls that test positive for Trich must be identified with a KS-TRICH POSITIVE ear tag, and then sold for slaughter only.

There is no legal treatment for males or females; culling infected bulls and open cows is the best management method for Trich-positive herds.

## WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I SUSPECT TRICH IN MY HERD?

Contact your herd veterinarian or a Kansas Animal Health state veterinarian.

# KANSAS TRICH REGULATIONS

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**BULLS** moving into Kansas, or changing ownership or possession within Kansas, must meet one of the following criteria:

- Non-virgin bulls or bulls greater than 18 months of age must either:
  - Be tested for Trichomoniasis by a Trich-certified veterinarian and certified negative within 60 days prior to change of ownership or possession, with no subsequent exposure to female cattle, or
  - Be sold for slaughter only, or sold for feeding for slaughter purposes
- Virgin bulls 18 months of age or younger may change ownership or possession without a negative trich test if the owner signs the Kansas Bull Status Affidavit verifying the bulls have not been sexually exposed to breeding-aged females
- Virgin bulls 24 months of age or younger that originate from a herd with a herd management plan approved by the animal health commissioner shall not be required to be tested for Trich and certified negative prior to changing possession or ownership
- Bulls imported or moved intrastate for exhibition (show or rodeo) are not required to have a negative Trich test if they will not be sexually exposed to females while in Kansas

**COWS AND HEIFERS** moving into Kansas must meet one of the following criteria or move into an approved Kansas livestock market and then meet one of the following criteria:

- Move for slaughter or feeding purposes only with no bull exposure after entering Kansas
- Have a calf at side and no exposure since parturition to bulls other than certified negative *Tritrichomonas foetus* bulls
- Are at least 120 days pregnant
- Are virgin heifers with no sexual exposure to bulls since weaning
- Have had at least 120 days of sexual isolation
- Are heifers or cows exposed only to certified negative *Tritrichomonas foetus* bulls
- Are moving for embryo transfer or other artificial reproduction procedure with no exposure to bulls after entering Kansas
- Cows and heifers imported for exhibition (show or rodeo) are not required to meet the above criteria if they will not be sexually exposed to bulls while in Kansas

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

For further information on Trich, importing animals to Kansas and to access additional Kansas resources visit, [www.agriculture.ks.gov/trich](http://www.agriculture.ks.gov/trich) or the Kansas State Veterinary Diagnostic Lab, [www.ksvdl.org](http://www.ksvdl.org).

# KANSAS TRICH

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

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**Q. Just how accurate is the PCR test?**

A. It is 98% sensitive, when the sample is properly collected and handled.

**Q. What is the producer's cost to get the test?**

A. About \$50 – 70, depending on vet fees; plus yardage, if the bull is tested at a livestock market.

**Q. Do we have a lot of Trich in Kansas?**

A. Only 1.5-2% of bulls tested, tested positive. However, Kansas has not tested a lot of bulls, compared to the number of bulls we have in Kansas.

**Q. Does premium nutrition or body condition prevent this disease?**

A. No, it is a venereal disease.

**Q. Can samples be pooled at the lab, if so how many samples per pool?**

A. Yes, five samples may be pooled. Individual samples are collected and sent to the lab as separate submissions, and then the pooling process occurs at the lab. This is cost effective in expected negative herds; it is not cost effective in an infected herd.

**Q. What stage of pregnancy will the cow abort?**

A. Most cows experience fetal loss at 50-70 days of gestation or may abort at 5-7 months. Very few infected cows will carry the calf to term.

**Q. Can I test my cows?**

A. Yes, but the test is not very reliable. Multiple tests are required for dependability, thus it is not cost effective. Assuming a cow is not re-infected by a positive bull, she will usually clear the infection on her own.

**Q. Can I vaccinate my cows?**

A. Yes, but the vaccine only helps the infected cow clear the infection and maintain pregnancy. It does NOT prevent infection, and vaccinated cows are not protected from getting Trich the next breeding season. If a vaccination program is part of your herd management plan, it should be under the direction of your herd veterinarian.

**Q. Can Trich be in frozen semen?**

A. Yes, it may survive the freezing/storage process.

**Q. To which lab do we send the test?**

A. Any accredited approved lab is acceptable. The Kansas State Veterinary Diagnostic Lab is the only approved lab in Kansas.

**Q. If I buy a "virgin bull," my herd is safe, right?**

A. If you can defend the bull's "virginity," you should be confident that this statement is correct. If you can't absolutely prove virginity, then NO.

**Q. If a producer tests their own bull(s) with no intention of selling it/them, and it is positive, does it have to be sold for slaughter?**

A. All positive tested bulls, regardless of why they were tested, will be required to go to slaughter.

**Q. If a bull tests positive and there are open cows in the same associated herd, could the cows be sold at the livestock market and go back to the country, or are they to be sold as "slaughter only" animals?**

A. The entire herd identified as having a Trich positive bull will be placed under quarantine. Any cow leaving the quarantined herd before the requirements of the quarantine have been met will be tagged with a KS-TRICH POSITIVE tag and must either be sold for "slaughter only" or "feeding for slaughter only."

**Q. How do I find out if my neighbor has a positive herd?**

A. The owner or manager of a Trich-positive herd must submit a list of all adjacent landowners or managers to the Animal Health Commissioner within 14 days of their herd being confirmed positive. KDA will then notify all neighbors via certified mail.

**Q. How do I find out what other states' import regulations are before I send a bull there?**

A. Contact the receiving state's animal health officials to determine their requirements or visit [www.agriculture.ks.gov/trich](http://www.agriculture.ks.gov/trich) for a link to other state's import pages.