

Nebraska Department of Agriculture Animal and Plant Health Protection



Frequently Asked Questions about bovine Trichomoniasis (Trich)

Trichomoniasis (Trich) is a disease of cattle that causes infertility, open cows, and occasional abortions in cows and heifers. It is a disease that can be **economically devastating** for infected herds. Below is a list of some Frequently Asked Questions that we hope will help you understand the seriousness of this disease. Trich is a complicated disease and the answers below are not meant to give in-depth knowledge of the disease. For more information, you can call the Nebraska Department of Agriculture at 402-471-2351, or go to our web site at <http://www.agr.ne.gov/animal/trichomoniasis.html> or the University of Nebraska web site at <http://beef.unl.edu/beefreports/symp-2005-15-XIX.pdf>

What is Trichomoniasis (Trich)?

Trichomoniasis (Trich) is a venereal disease in cattle. Bulls carry the disease and transmit it to cows through breeding. Clean bulls can also become infected by breeding infected cows. This disease causes cows to abort and become temporarily infertile.

How is Trich spread?

Trich is a **venereal disease** of cattle (all breeds). The disease is transmitted by infected bulls to cows and infected cows to bulls.

How does Trich get into my herd?

Trich will most likely get into your herd by the addition of new animals, either bulls or cows, that already have the disease. It also may be introduced from a neighbor's herd that has the disease, if their bulls or cows inadvertently breed with your animals.

What are the signs or symptoms of "Trich" in cattle?

Neither the cow nor the bull appears ill at any time when they are infected with this organism. The only sign of trich is when there are reproductive problems in the herd. The first sign is usually an increase in the number of open and late calving cows.

How is Trich diagnosed in my herd?

The organism is easier to find in bulls than in cows, because bulls become "carriers," while cows can eventually clear themselves of the infection. Scrapings of preputial (internal sheath) fluids of the bulls are taken to be cultured or have a PCR test. If even one bull is positive, you have to assume that the whole herd is infected. There is no test for live cows.

How common is Trich?

Trich is already present in Nebraska and is considered a reportable disease, but we only see 10-12 cases a year. In states to our south, the rate of infection is higher and may be as high as 5% of the total herds.

Is the diagnosis a sure thing?

No, the test for Trich is not a perfect test, but having all of your bulls tested by a veterinarian will pick up most infected herds. Testing the herd (all the bulls in the herd) once gives us an 80-90% chance of finding the disease, if it's there. Repeat testing (up to three times, at weekly intervals) is necessary, if we want to be more than 99% sure the entire bull herd is negative.

What is the State of Nebraska doing to protect the cattle in the state from Trich exposure?

The Nebraska Department of Agriculture - Animal and Plant Health Protection has an import order that only allows the import of breeding cattle from other states, if the cattle can meet certain Trich requirements. To read the requirements go to www.agr.ne.gov and look under animal imports.

How do I get rid of Trich in my herd?

It is a complicated process dependent upon a variety of herd management factors. Producers will need to work with their veterinarian to develop a comprehensive herd health plan.