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Trich is not a Treat

Halloween has come and gone but the reproductive disease Trichomoniasis is still scaring beef cattle producers across Iowa.

Since Trich was first discovered in southern Iowa 2012, it has been popping up clear to the Minnesota border. Iowa producers need to be diligent the next few years to prevent a widespread outbreak of Trich across the state. As we have progressed through this growing problem, the dynamics of how Trich is spreading is changing.

Initially, positive herds that were identified had a history of buying open cows to expand their herd. However, some recently diagnosed herds have not had the typical history of 'buying the disease.'

This fact indicates that the source of infection is probably from a neighboring herd. Most likely a positive bull has jumped into the pasture or your bull went visiting somewhere else and brought it back. As Trich spreads around the state with more positive herds, it is going to take a community effort to eradicate the disease from the state again.

Trich is a sexually transmitted disease caused by a protozoan that is carried by permanently infected bulls and transmitted to cows during breeding. Cows will usually conceive but then experience embryonic loss. Typically a herd is diagnosed with Trich positive animals after the farmer experiences 30-70% late bred or open cows.

After 45-60 days the cow will be able to clear the infection and if she gets bred again will normally be able to maintain the pregnancy. Cow-calf producers can do several things to promptly identify the disease and prevent its further spread.

Starting now, producers need to monitor the reproductive performance of their cow herd. Any evidence of decreased reproductive performance should be thoroughly investigated before Trich is ruled out. Remember that a single negative test does not mean that a bull is clean since Trich can be hard to detect.

If I am suspicious of Trich, I don't declare a bull clean until he has three negative tests.

With increased risk of Trich, producers need to make sure that they do not buy Trich. Only virgin bulls should be brought onto the operation.

Additionally, only buy open virgin or pregnant heifers to expand

your herd. If you must buy older females, only purchase cows that are pregnant at least 120 days and keep these cows separate from your main cow herd until they have calved and gotten pregnant again. Additionally, you should Trich test the bulls that have been with purchased cows after the breeding season.


Finally, producers need to pay attention to what is happening out on pasture. Make sure fences are in good shape and be vigilant to make sure there is not any interaction with outside animals. Communication between local producers will also be important in order to keep this disease from spreading more. Although the state has regulations requiring testing of bulls coming into the state, there are not regulations on cows coming into the state or instate marketing of cows or bulls.

Producers need to wary of this disease to make sure we don't have a state wide outbreak with hundreds of infected herds that other states have experienced.

Routine testing of bulls will help detect the disease early and prevent severe losses. Contact your veterinarian and schedule your pregnancy testing and have your bulls tested soon.

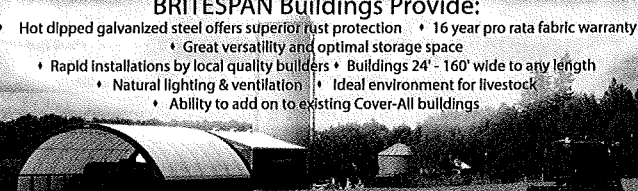
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Editor's note: Mike Fitzgerald is a Loader Product Specialist for Bobcat Company in Fargo, ND.