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## UCD VET VIEWS

CALIFORNIA CATTLEMAN, MAY 1998

### *Trichomoniasis Workgroup Meeting Summary*

The California Cattlemen's Association (CCA) Trichomoniasis Workgroup met on March 20, 1998 in Sacramento at the CCA headquarters. The purpose of this meeting was to outline coordinated options for the control of Trichomoniasis in beef cattle that the CCA membership could consider for the mid-year meeting. Representation at the meeting was excellent. At least one member from each of the nine CCA zones was present or had sent in comments for the group to consider. There were eighteen workgroup members in attendance, including representatives from the California Department of Food and Agriculture, the California Veterinary Medical Association, the United States Department of Agriculture, the School of Veterinary Medicine at UC-Davis, and the University of California Cooperative Extension. The workgroup focused on developing coordinated options for the control of Trichomoniasis that would be based on sound scientific information, that would have the possibility for widespread producer support, would have identifiable benefits and risks, and if implemented, would reduce Trichomoniasis in beef cattle in California. Several interesting facts were brought out during the discussions that are listed below. These facts could have a major impact on the effectiveness of any proposed program.

#### Transmission of Trichomoniasis

Up to 1% of Trichomoniasis-infected cows can carry the organism for one year after initial infection. These cows could infect new bulls introduced into the herd.

Bulls can become infected within as little as 24 hours of breeding an infected cow.

In a 1990 survey of beef herds in California, approximately 16% of the herds were found to be infected and larger herds were more likely to be infected than small herds.

Leasing, buying, and/or borrowing mature bulls of unknown Trichomoniasis history is very risky in terms of introducing Trichomoniasis into a herd.

#### Diagnosis of Trichomoniasis

Current methods of sampling (In Pouch) and culturing bulls for Trichomoniasis identify about 90% of the positive bulls on the first test.

Bulls should be sexually rested before testing; otherwise, false negative tests (test is negative when the bull is a positive carrier) are likely. Breeding removes most of the organisms from the bull's reproductive tract and the test is negative. It is recommended that bulls be sexually rested 1-2 weeks before testing.

The cost of sampling and laboratory testing in California is approximately \$18-22 per bull per test.

#### Prevention of Trichomoniasis

The current Trichomoniasis vaccines do not prevent infection of the bull, the cows, or the herd. The vaccines cause the cow to clear the infection much faster after they have become infected with the Trichomoniasis organism.

Prevention requires a coordinated program to be successful. There is no one easy answer.

#### Trichomoniasis Control Options

A large number of options for Trichomoniasis control programs were discussed at the workgroup meeting. There was not a large amount of support for mandatory testing of all bulls in the state on a yearly basis, as is done in the Idaho control program. At this time, a mandatory testing program option will not be presented for consideration. The options that the workgroup thought appropriate for consideration are summarized below. Advantages and disadvantages are listed. Some of these options could be combined; however, they are presented as separate items for discussion purposes.

#### Education

An intensive educational effort aimed at cow-calf producers, purebred producers, and bull sales organizations would be initiated. This educational effort would involve University of California-Davis faculty at the School of Veterinary Medicine, UC Cooperative Extension personnel, local veterinarians, and local cattlemen's associations. This program would be patterned after the CCA Quality Assurance Program. Current factual information would be organized into a standardized educational program. When a local association wished to put on a Trichomoniasis educational program, this material would be available.

Advantages: relatively inexpensive, voluntary program, no regulations involved.

Disadvantages: the people whose cattle may be spreading the disease may not show up for the educational programs.

### Voluntary Testing/Reportable Disease with no action

This program would not result in any changes in the current system with the exception that a positive Trichomoniasis test result would have to be reported to the CDFA Animal Health Branch. The CDFA would not take any action; however, they would compile the information on a county or region basis. Veterinarians and laboratories would be obligated to report all positive test results to the CDFA. The testing of bulls would proceed as is currently done, on a 100% voluntary basis. Positive results would have to be reported to the CDFA who would compile the positive results on a county or regional basis. The CDFA would not take any action regarding the positive herds.

Advantages: relatively inexpensive, voluntary program with the exception of reporting, data could be used to prioritize Trichomoniasis disease research, data could be used to track the progress of preventive programs on a statewide basis.  
Disadvantages: Veterinarians and laboratories would have to report positive results, CDFA cannot guarantee anonymity because of ifreedom of information rules.

### Voluntary Testing/Reportable Disease and neighboring herds notified of positive herds

Testing of bulls would continue on a voluntary basis. Veterinarians and laboratories would have to report any positive results to the CDFA. The CDFA would compile the results and would take the additional action of notifying neighboring herds of a positive herd in the area. There would be no quarantine of positive bulls or positive herds.

Advantages: relatively inexpensive, voluntary program with the exception of reporting and notification of neighbors, data could be used to prioritize Trichomoniasis disease research, data could be used to track the progress of preventive programs on a statewide or local basis, neighbors would be notified of positive results so they could consider testing to identify Trichomoniasis in their herds at a much earlier time than would occur normally. This would be an economic advantage for neighboring herds.

Disadvantages: Veterinarians and laboratories would have to report positive results, CDFA would take action to notify neighbors of positive herds and this could have a negative impact on herds with Trichomoniasis.

### Mandatory Testing of Imported Bulls

Bulls coming into California would have to be tested for Trichomoniasis. This is essentially what the Wyoming control program consists of. There could be many exceptions to the testing requirements, i.e., virgin bulls (owner certified), rodeo bulls, bulls for studs, etc.

Advantages: Keep positive bulls from coming into state.

Disadvantages: Mandatory testing of bulls, possible certification of testing methods and laboratories, Wyoming reports that their program has not been effective in reducing the prevalence of Trichomoniasis.

It is obvious what a complicated issue any Trichomoniasis program might be. An additional decision by the workgroup was that this voluntary workgroup should continue to meet and exchange information. The workgroup can continue as part of the Cattle Health Committee. This will allow CCA to have a group of industry-based experts to consider new options if things change in the future. Please consider these options and contact Pat Blacklock at CCA headquarters or your local association officers with your ideas and opinions.

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