

Diseases of Cattle

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TRICHOMONIASIS

Trichomoniasis is a venereal disease of cattle that causes infertility and occasional abortions in cows and heifers. It is caused by *Trichomonas fetus*, a small motile protozoan found only in the reproductive tract of the bull and cow. Disease organisms transferred to the cow's vagina from the bull during breeding migrate up to the uterus and cause the infection. Recently infected cows develop a mild white sticky discharge from the vulva which can last for up to two months. Large number of cows, often over 90% of the herd, will be affected in herds that have not been previously infected. Repeat breeding or infertility of individual cows can last up to five months. The reason for repeat breeding appears to be death of the embryo, often within 10 days. Eventually cows begin to cycle again and can carry a fetus to term.

No vaccines are available for its prevention, but using artificial insemination and virgin bulls aid in control. Bulls are the main carriers of Trichomoniasis and, once infected, remain infected for life but show no signs of disease. Diagnosis of the disease can be confirmed microscopically.

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