

Epidemiology of *Tritrichomonas foetus* in beef bull populations in Florida.

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Abstract

The objectives of this study were to estimate the prevalence of herd and individual bull infection with *Tritrichomonas foetus* in a survey of beef bulls in the state of Florida and to perform an epidemiological investigation of risk factors for the disease. Bulls were tested for *T. foetus* colonization by a single preputial scraping and culture. Bull infection prevalence within herds was calculated and relationships with bull, herd factors, and production measurements were determined. The survey included 1984 beef bulls in 59 herds throughout Florida; nine bulls in three small herds (<100 cows) were later excluded from the models. An overall prevalence for *T. foetus*-infected bulls was 6.0% (within-herd prevalence ranged from 0 to 27%). The herd prevalence was 30.4% (i. e. at least one infected bull); infected bulls were found in 11.1 and 39.5% of herds sampled in North and South Florida, respectively. The likelihood of disease was greatest in larger herds in more extensive management settings (> or = 500 cows, 53.9% prevalence; medium-sized herds of 100-499 cows, 10.0% prevalence). *Tritrichomonas foetus* infection was associated with several bull factors, including age, breed, herd, and herd management practices (bull-to-cow ratio, bulls per breeding group). *Tritrichomonas foetus* infection continues to be prevalent in beef herds in Florida that use natural service.