



TRANSPORTING DAIRY CATTLE

Animal disease traceability, or knowing where diseased and at-risk animals are, where they've been, and when, is very important (think Ebola). Some bovine diseases result in having to slaughter your cattle, so keeping up-to-date on all required tests is a necessary part of raising and keeping dairy cattle. Plan on at least a week for all testing results to be completed, as some test require waiting periods for results.

Three of the most serious bovine diseases are Bovine Tuberculosis, Brucellosis, and Trichomoniasis.

- Bovine Tuberculosis is a dangerous, chronic, bacterial respiratory-tract disease that can be passed from cows to humans (typically by the ingestion of unpasteurized milk or close contact with their aerosol secretions) and from humans and other animals to cows. Cattle found to be infected with TB are culled. Testing requires a period of three days; my veterinarian came to my farm and gave my cows a "prick test" under their tails with a live antigen, then came back three days later to check the test sites. One of my cows had a reaction; authorities move quickly when that first test is reactive—at 7 a.m. the next morning, the state veterinarian showed up to do a more rigorous test. Thankfully, my cow had produced a false-positive first test; further testing showed she was free from the disease.

- Brucellosis is a highly contagious disease that affects both cattle and humans through ingestion of unpasteurized milk or undercooked meat from infected animals or close contact with their secretions. The disease is also known as contagious abortion or Bang's disease, and causes abortions and lowered milk production. In humans, it's known as undulant fever with severe intermittent fever and long-lasting, flu-like symptoms. There is no effective way to detect infected animals by their appearance, and there is no vaccine for bulls, but female calves are vaccinated when they are between 4 months and 1 year old. Vaccination is not 100% effective in preventing brucellosis; it typically protects about 70-80% of the vaccinated cattle from becoming infected by an average exposure. The vaccine is a live product and must be administered only by an accredited veterinarian or State or Federal Animal Health Official. Brucellosis-infected animals are often culled.

- Trichomoniasis (trich) is a parasitic protozoan that resides in the tissues lining the penis, prepuce, and sheath of bulls, and when spread to a cow through intercourse, causes cows to abort. There is no treatment, so infected bulls must be slaughtered. Fewer than 1% of cows remain carriers (most cows will clear the infection on their own), so they're usually retested before being culled. As the disease spreads, more and more states are passing laws requiring producers to test their bulls. My state (Idaho) was the first to implement a mandatory trich testing and identification program.

Because of these diseases and their ramifications, when moving cattle from state to state (interstate), you must follow specific rules set up by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service.

All female dairy cattle of any age and all dairy males born after March 11, 2013 must be officially identified and accompanied by an Interstate Certificate of Veterinary Inspection (CVI), often referred to as a health certificate—an official document issued by a Federal, State or Tribal Animal Health Official or an accredited veterinarian. (On my CVI, my vet also hand-wrote “Not M branded (Mexico origin) and not commingled with M branded cattle.”)

- Official identification, supplied only by a Federal, State or Tribal Animal Health Official or an accredited veterinarian, must be recorded on or attached to the CVI. (The number issued to animals will stay with them for their lifetime, even if a tag falls out.)
- An orange metal ear tag (vet supplied/issued by the USDA) has a paper trail associated with it. The tag is put in a female’s right ear when given a Bang’s vaccination for Brucellosis. Also at that time, her right ear is tattooed in case the orange metal tag ever falls out. (In a female, this tag can then be used as an ID tag for her other required tests/tracking.)
- A silver metal tag is simply an identification tag (vet supplied/issued by the USDA) used for tests like Bang’s (bulls) and TB (cows, if they’ve lost their orange tag). Even though metal tags can come out (the reason chips are becoming more popular), it is considered a permanent tag given to a particular animal and also has a paper trail associated with it.
- 840 RFID (Radio Frequency Identification or Electronic) ear tags.
- Registered breed association tattoos or tags, and brands registered with the state brand board may be used if accepted by both the state of origin and the state of destination.

Find out more at USDA Animal Disease Traceability (www.aphis.usda.gov/wps/portal/aphis/ourfocus/animalhealth?1dmy&urile=wcm%3apath%3a%2FAPHIS_Content_Library%2FSA_Our_Focus%2F-SA_Animal_Health%2FSA_Traceability).

There may be additional requirements by your state pertaining to moving animals into your state. Contact your state’s Animal Health Official for import requirements for your state. Find state-by-state contact information for all state Animal Health Officials at www.aphis.usda.gov/traceability/downloads/StateAnimalHealthOfficials.pdf. Idaho’s number is (208) 332-8540.

For example, Idaho’s law (www.agri.idaho.gov/Categories/Animals/importExport/indeximportexport.php) includes the following rules for all cattle coming into the state:

- All intact dairy cattle 6 months of age and older require a negative TB test within 60 days. Females over 4 months of age must be Brucellosis vaccinated. All bulls require an entry permit and either negative Trichomoniasis test within the last 30 days or, if under 12 months, a virgin bull statement. (A certification of virgin status signed by the owner or an authorized veterinarian, saying the bull has never been commingled with breeding females.)

- Due to Vesicular Stomatitis (VS)—a virus infection that resembles foot-and-mouth disease and can be transmitted to humans—all livestock (including cattle, swine, equines, domestic cervidae, and camelids) entering Idaho from Texas and Colorado must meet additional requirements. The animals cannot enter Idaho if they originate from a facility within 10 miles of a diagnosed case of VS. All livestock from Texas and Colorado require an entry permit listed on the CVI, as well as the following statement: “All animals identified on this certificate of veterinary inspection have been examined and found to be free from Vesicular Stomatitis. During the last thirty (30) days; these animals have neither been exposed to Vesicular Stomatitis nor located within an area where Vesicular Stomatitis has been diagnosed.”

- Note that cattle coming from California and Michigan have different requirements, due to confirmed cases of bovine TB in those areas.

- There are also additional requirements for bringing dairy cattle in from other countries, including Canada. Requirements are written and maintained by each state. Find more information at www.aphis.usda.gov/wps/portal/aphis/ourfocus/importexport?1dmy&urile=wcm%3apath%3a%2Faphis_content_library%2Fsa_our_focus%2Fsa_animal_health%2Fsa_import_into_us%2Fsa_entry_requirements%2Fct_us%2Bstate_and_territory_animal_import_regulations.

Brand inspection:

A brand inspection (to verify ownership) is also required prior to the movement of cattle to an out-of-state destination. That means it's required by the state you live in. In my state, for the purpose of leaving the state or going to slaughter, a brand inspection is good for only 96 hours, and all livestock must be brand inspected whether the animal is actually branded or not. My inspection was handled by the Idaho Brand Inspector at the Idaho State Police at 208-799-5019, who came to my farm to do the inspection. In Idaho, we also have an “annual brand inspection,” good for up to 12 months and designed to allow livestock owners to travel in and out of the state of Idaho to our neighboring states annually (but it can't be used for slaughter, sale, or trade). We have reciprocal agreements with most all of our neighboring states, except the states of Montana and Wyoming. So, even though I could have used an annual brand inspection for transporting my bull for semen collection, I still couldn't use it because my bull was going to Montana to the Genex facility for collection.

Remember, to transport your cattle, you'll always need:

- Official Identification in the form of ear tags (also need an orange ear tag or ear tattoo for all females to show they've been vaccinated for Brucellosis)
- a Certificate of Veterinary Inspection (health certificate)
- a Brand Inspection (only good for 96 hours)
- a Trich Test (only good for 30 days) or a virgin bull statement
- a TB Test (only good for 60 days)

In addition, you might need other tests (such as the VS example above) required by the destination state.