



Northern California Ranch Update



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California's Trichomonosis Control Program: Proposed Changes

There has been a lot of discussion regarding the current California Trichomonosis Control Program. Despite the overwhelming general support and the acceptance by producers, one problem that has been highlighted is the repeat infections in herds adopting good preventive practices. It is apparent that in some locales herds are being continually re-infected by some neighboring operations. CDFA has proposed changes in these regulations. CCA membership has adopted policy that support these changes and they have been joined by other organizations such as the Farm Bureau. We will review the changes in this column.

There are a number of areas in the control program where changes are proposed: (1) importation of bulls, (2) pasture-to-pasture herds movements, (3) public sale of bulls, (4) sampling by veterinarians, (5) laboratory certification, (6) confirmatory tests of lab results, (7) investigation and mandatory testing of neighboring at-risk herds, and (8) disposition of infected cattle.

What are the proposed regulations for imported bulls? First, bulls 18 months of age or older must have the following:

- ▶ Official individual animal identification
- ▶ An interstate entry permit number
- ▶ A negative Trichomonosis test result (collected after 10 days of sexual rest and within 60 days of entry into California)
- ▶ A health certificate (Certificate of Veterinary Inspection) which states:
 - (a) The bull(s) is Trich test negative and have not had sexual contact since their last negative test.
 - (b) Trichomonosis has not been diagnosed in the herd within the last 24 months.
 - (c) A bull originating from a herd that has had Trichomonosis diagnosed within the last 24 months must have three (3) negative tests conducted at least 7 days apart and not more than 28 days apart, with the last test conducted within 60 days prior to entry.

These same requirements must also be met by bulls entering California for sales purposes.

What about pasture-to-pasture movements of bulls? Bulls as part of a pasture-to-pasture permitted herd must have one negative test within the 12 months prior to entry. The permit must include the date of the test, negative test results, and the name and contact information of the testing veterinarian.

Are there any exemptions for import testing of bulls? Yes, bulls that are to be used solely of exhibition purposes (rodeo bulls for example) may be exempt from import testing. However, these exhibition bulls must be confined to the location of the exhibition without having access or being allowed to commingle with sexually mature female cattle. Secondly, bulls that are being used solely for artificial insemination and housed under protocols that meet the Certified Semen Services standards may be exempt from the testing requirements. A third possibility is an exemption for bulls consigned directly to slaughter without unloading prior to arrival at the slaughter plant.

What about bulls sold at public auction within California?

Bulls 18 months of age or older sold through a public livestock market shall be sold only to slaughter or to a feedlot designated only for slaughter unless accompanied by a negative Trichomonosis test result from a sample taken by a Trichomonosis approved veterinarian within 30 days prior to sale. Additionally, public salesyards shall post a sign saying "All bulls 18 months of age and over sold for breeding must have a negative Trichomonosis test or consigned as slaughter only."

How is Trichomonosis testing done? Only USDA accredited California licensed veterinarians can take samples from cattle for Trichomonosis testing. These veterinarians must successfully complete a training program approved by CDFA for sampling and handling specimens used in the diagnosis of Trichomonosis. Any testing, reading or diagnosis of Trichomonosis must be performed in an approved laboratory under the direction of a person approved by CDFA to perform these activities. CDFA will also maintain a list of certified veterinarians and approved laboratories. It is important to note that all Trichomonosis tests are official tests and both presumptive and confirmatory tests must be reported.

What will happen when infected cattle are identified? First, the state veterinarian will impose a quarantine on the herd and any Trichomonosis infected cattle will be held on the premises where found and movement may be allowed only under written confirmation by CDFA. Infected cattle can only be moved to slaughter and written confirmation of the slaughter is required. In the infected herd, all herdmate bulls shall be held on the premises until three (3) negative tests are completed and any cattle determined to be infected will be handled as above.

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What about neighboring herds that might have been exposed?

CDFA veterinarians will conduct an epidemiological evaluation to identify exposed herds. All herdmate bulls in a Trichomonosis exposed herd shall be held on the premises where found until one (1) negative Trichomonosis tests is completed. Any infected cattle will be handled as in any infected herd. The testing in exposed herds will be at the owner's expense.

If the proposed changes are adopted it will give veterinary professionals the necessary tools to clean up Trichomonosis in a given locale and prevent "spillover" infections from continually occurring. The Trichomonosis control program will be reviewed constantly by CCA and other producer groups. CCA and CDFA welcome all comments and suggestions.

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Barb Goatgrass – Impact and Control

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Although first identified in California in the early 1900s, the large spread of barb goatgrass (*Aegilops triuncialis* L.) is relatively recent in the Sacramento Valley foothills. Its first introduction is associated with the importation of Mexican cattle to Eldorado and Sacramento Counties. Populations of goatgrass continue to grow as the weed moves further north.



Barb Goatgrass—Spring

*Photography by Dennis Nay - NRCS Range Specialist
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Impact of Barb Goatgrass on Rangelands

Barb goatgrass grows in dense stands much the same as medusa-head; however, its deeper and more rapidly growing roots make it even more competitive on annual rangeland. The slowly decomposing thatch creates a mulch that crowds out all other desirable forage and native perennial species, creating a monoculture that quickly infests an entire ranch. The plant is generally unpalatable, especially when it matures. Its long awns protrude from the seed head and can cause serious mechanical injury to livestock. Not only is forage quality greatly reduced from goatgrass infestations, but also the pounds of production in infested rangelands have been stated to decrease by 50 to over 75 percent. In addition, since livestock tend to avoid the plant, selected consumption of more desirable plants weakens them and heightens the ability of goatgrass spread.

Identification and Life Cycle

Barb goatgrass is an 8-16 inch tall winter annual that, like medusa-head, matures later than most common annuals such as soft chess, wild oats and rip gut brome. The immature plant closely resembles medusahead, but produces a very different seed head that resembles a wheat kernel. Three long and barbed awns protrude from each glume. It also differs in that the entire spikelet drops from the stem and remains intact on the soil surface until fall rains stimulate germination. This is different from medusa-head, which still displays a seedless head in the fall residual dry matter (see photo below). Another distinguishing feature is goatgrass' ability to proliferate in multiple types of soils including serpentine soils where many annual grasses have not prospered.

The plant produces both large and small seeds that differ in germination time due to both maternal and sibling factors. Research shows the large seeds germinate more rapidly and actually hinder smaller seed germination while they're still together in the spikelet (sibling). It is also demonstrated that a chemical from the spikelets retards the smaller seeds germination (maternal). These factors can cause smaller seeds to remain dormant for up to five years, but dormancy has been generally accepted as two years. This is important because it means that gaining control of the seed bank will take several years due to the smaller seeds delayed germination.

Control

Various methods of control have been tested with differing amounts of success. In all cases where treatment incurs excess removal of litter, reseeding of desirable clover or grass species should be done to prevent another infestation of non-desirable species.

Burning

Data from research at the UC Hopland Research and Extension Center shown burning at the proper time for two consecutive years proved proficient in controlling goatgrass infestations. Complete control was not found in a single burn due to a build up of the

seed bank. Proper burning time was found to be late spring when there was enough fire fuel load, but before seeds were viable and the spikelets were still in the inflorescence. Multiple burns were also found to increase populations of native species.

Chemical

There is no selective herbicide for goatgrass control so herbicides that control goatgrass will generally kill surrounding grasses, forbs and legumes. Spraying selected patches is very effective in the winter or spring, but may take two years of application to ensure the seed bank is depleted.

Mowing and/or Grazing

Mowing alone has shown limited benefit in complete control due to low growing or bent over plants being missed. Although livestock typically avoid goatgrass, intensive grazing at seed head emergence removes animal selectivity and can prevent goatgrass seed formation. Current UC research is looking at the effectiveness of properly timed grazing of goatgrass at differing stocking rates.

For assistance in barb goatgrass control contact Josh Davy at the Tehama County Cooperative Extension office (530) 527-3101.

Information Drawn From:

DiTomaso J. M., K. L. Heise, G. B. Kyser, A. M. Merenlender and R. J. Keiffer. 2001. Carefully timed burning can control barb goatgrass. *California Agriculture* 55(6) pp. 47-53.

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Efficacy of Pour-on Vs. Injectable Ivomec Trial

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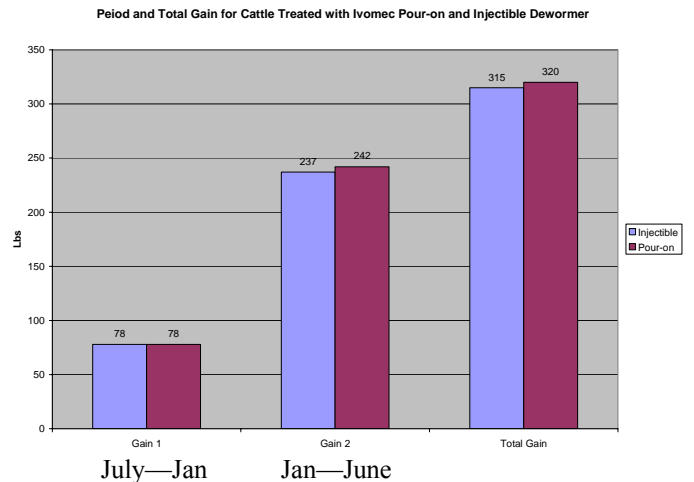
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Currently there are many dewormer choices for cattle. The routes of administration include oral (pastes and drenches), injectables, and pour-ons. Consequently, some producers worry about the effectiveness of the various products, be they oral, pour-ons or injectables.

In 1992 a trial was conducted on 68 crossbred steers purchased in the spring. Two different dewormer treatments were administered, either pour-on or injectable Ivomec®. Merck and Co. products were used (at the time of this project, Merck was the

only company who could legally use ivermectin as the active ingredient for dewormers).

Products were applied according to the label directions. Treatment was randomly assigned to the steers. Cattle were weighed and shipped to irrigated pasture in the Marysville area in July. In January, cattle were gathered, retreated, weighed and then shipped to Walnut Creek where they grazed annual rangeland through the grazing season. In June, cattle were gathered and weighed.



Cattle gains were similar by treatment. In this trial, the route of administration did not affect net gain statistically.

Each method of administration brings with it advantages and disadvantages that need to be carefully considered before a product is selected. The pour-on products are easy to use. However, some of the pour-on products are flammable and their use at branding can result in fire. These products could be less effective if applied during rain or snow that washed product off. Additionally, if liver flukes are a concern, there are no pour-on products that contain a flukicide. The injectable products can be applied during inclement weather. Their use requires the animal be “poked” with another needle at processing, however.

In most of California, veterinarians suggest you treat beef cattle to control flukes at least once per year. Currently, there are only two drugs that kill flukes—clorsulon and albendazole. Clorsulon comes as a drench (Curatrem®) or injectable (Ivomec Plus®). Albendazole comes as drench (Valbazen®). If you wish to treat liver flukes, make sure the product you are using has the appropriate material in it to kill flukes.

According to some people, generic ivermectin products may not be as effective in killing parasites as branded products and producers should consult with their veterinarian regarding this aspect of drug selection.

Let us know what you think!!!

This newsletter contains articles written by University of California Farm Advisors, Specialists, and Program Representatives. Our aim in writing this newsletter is to provide the ranching community in the Sacramento Valley with science based information for your consideration. Our intent is that this newsletter will be published on a quarterly basis. We welcome your feedback and encourage you to call or email with questions, comments, or ideas for future articles.

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