

## Being a responsible buyer

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Submitted to: *Cattle Business Magazine*, July 2013

It's that time of year when the cattle trade publications are packed full of fall production sale advertisements. Nationwide, total cattle inventory is down, replacement prices are up, and many breeders are making plans to offer stock in the fall.

Bringing in animals from outside sources, whether for breeding purposes or feeding purposes, poses the biggest risk to your herd health. This month we will briefly discuss some of the major health management practices as well as veterinary inspection requirements that should be considered when bringing in new animals.



### Health Management

Biosecurity is extremely important when bringing in new animals. Know the health status of animals you are considering for purchase. Ask the important questions: Have the animals been properly vaccinated? If so, what products were used, and were they modified-live or killed vaccines? When was the last deworming performed? Is the herd tested for diseases such as bovine viral diarrhea (BVD) or Johne's? Have bulls been tested for breeding soundness, and do they come with any health or reproductive guarantees? What is the health history of the herd? Oftentimes the overall health history of the herd is just as valuable, if not more valuable, than individual animal information. If you don't have one already, develop an overall biosecurity plan specific to your operation. In addition to newly purchased animals, your biosecurity plan should include health and management practices for specific groups such as mature cows, calves, bulls and sick animals. In addition to some of the diseases mentioned previously, testing breeding animals for diseases such as trichomoniasis or brucellosis may be required, depending on the state of origin.

Upon arrival, new additions should ideally undergo a quarantine period from the rest of your herd for 4-6 weeks. This will give the animals time to get acclimated and to be administered any vaccination or deworming products consistent with those of your resident herd. If not done prior to purchase, bulls can have their breeding soundness exams (BSE's) and trichomoniasis testing performed during quarantine, leaving plenty of time in case replacements need to be sought. Make sure all animals in your resident herd are also properly vaccinated. Quarantined animals should be checked daily for signs of illness and disease. Nose-to-nose contact should be avoided between quarantined animals and the rest of the herd, especially with highly susceptible animals such as baby calves and late pregnancy heifers. In your daily routine, handle quarantined animals last to avoid carrying any potential diseases to the rest of the herd and use separate feeding equipment if possible. Wear clean boots and clothing, and disinfect all equipment that comes in contact with quarantined animals accordingly. Even if the 4-6 week period is not practical on your operation, a shorter quarantine period will still help protect your herd.

Cattle should be handled as gently and quietly as possible during transportation. Stress decreases an animal's immunity, making them more susceptible to disease, and can also interfere with an animal's ability to respond to vaccines. New arrivals should have plenty of fresh water and feed, preferably feed similar to what they are accustomed to in order to prevent any gastrointestinal problems for the first few weeks.

### Certificates of Veterinary Inspection and Animal Identification

All livestock moving interstate must be accompanied by a certificate of veterinary inspection (CVI), also known as a health certificate. In addition, according to the Animal Disease Traceability rule, breeding animals will need to be properly identified with an official approved identification method when moving interstate. Each state writes and maintains its own import requirements. While the specific formats may vary, CVI's will require the signature of a veterinarian to certify that the animals listed appear to be healthy, to be free from disease, and meet requirements for entry at the time of inspection. The physical location of the destination (not just the city or a PO Box number) should be clearly specified. While a CVI does not guarantee freedom from all diseases or an animal's future health and productivity, it does ensure that the animal appeared healthy to the veterinarian at the time of inspection. Since federally accredited and/or licensed veterinarians must personally inspect animals to be listed on the certificate, it is an important tool in the prevention of livestock diseases.

Specific state requirements, such as age confirmation or disease testing verification, may be included on this document. Furthermore, some states will require an entry permit number prior to the animals given permission to enter the state. Most health certificates are good for a period of 30 days from issuance. It is important to remember that the requirements of the state of destination, and not the state of origin, must be followed when animals are moved. A list of all states can be found at: [http://www.aphis.usda.gov/import\\_export/animals/animal\\_import/animal\\_imports\\_states.shtml](http://www.aphis.usda.gov/import_export/animals/animal_import/animal_imports_states.shtml). If unsure, it is recommended that the veterinarian or producer contact the state animal health official prior to any interstate livestock movements.

According to the Mississippi State Code §69-15-3, livestock movements must occur under the supervision and in accordance with the rules and regulations of the Mississippi Board of Animal Health (MBAH). If required, a CVI will be on file at the MBAH for livestock imported from another state. When a CVI is issued in Mississippi, a copy of the certificate is to accompany the animal shipment. The original certificate is returned to the Mississippi Board of Animal Health, and an additional copy is mailed to the state of destination. The use of electronic CVI's is becoming more popular and is encouraged.

Breeding-age animals have specific import requirements for diseases such as brucellosis, tuberculosis, and trichomoniasis. While surrounding states are free of brucellosis and tuberculosis, trichomoniasis, a venereal disease that causes reproductive failure, is considered to be a growing concern in the southeast. Mississippi, along with several other neighboring states, requires that all imported non-virgin bulls, or bulls over 24 months of age, be accompanied by a negative trichomoniasis test. A bull that is brought into this state without being accompanied by a negative test for trichomoniasis cannot be commingled with any cow unless it is tested and found to be negative for trichomoniasis prior to commingling. Positive animals must go directly to slaughter.

If you bring new animals onto your operation this fall, be a responsible buyer. Know the requirements when considering purchases or sales across state lines. It can prove to be a very costly practice to import cattle without the proper health requirements, not to mention risky to the overall health of your herd. In addition to performing the required veterinary inspections, your herd veterinarian can help you identify specific disease risks, prioritize the disease risks, and determine the most practical and effective biosecurity strategies to protect your cattle against disease from incoming cattle. Additional information on livestock entry requirements, including animal identification requirements and trichomoniasis regulations, can be found through your herd veterinarian or by contacting the MBAH at 601-359-1170 or online at <http://www.mbah.state.ms.us/regulations/index.html>.



Before bringing replacements or additions to your operation, be sure all health requirements and veterinary inspections are met.