

CSS Program Assures Disease-Free Semen

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Cattle ranchers and dairy farmers spend millions of dollars each year on health products for their herds, from vaccines to feed supplements, from insecticides to reproductive examinations.

For those using artificial insemination, there is an additional measure available to protect herd health. It is Certified Semen Services, whose mission is to help participating A.I. businesses protect their customers from getting semen from bulls carrying certain diseases.

The only cost to the semen buyer is the time it takes to look for the CSS logo displayed in the advertisements of participating A.I. organizations.

CSS assures the semen buyer that, if he purchases semen from an A.I. center participating in the CSS program, the donor bull has been negative on repeated testing for tuberculosis, brucellosis, trichomoniasis, vibriosis, leptospirosis and paratuberculosis (Johne's disease).

These six diseases either have been demonstrated to be transmissible via artificial insemination or have been shown through research to be present in the semen of in-

fectured bulls and to be able to survive the semen freezing process. Repeated testing is a reliable step toward control of these diseases.

A person using semen produced at a bull stud complying with the CSS minimum guidelines also receives assurance that this semen has been correctly identified and collected from the bull indicated. In addition to CSS's minimum health standards, a voluntary tagged ink program for identifying semen processors is to be instituted in the near future.

The role of Certified Semen Services, a subsidiary of the National Assn. of Animal Breeders, is to reduce the risk of disease and to prevent sire and semen mis-identification. Guidelines for semen quality and viability are not presently included within the scope of CSS.

Achieving the standards advocated by CSS requires that a bull stud follow several general health control programs as well as establish a well organized protocol for routine bull testing. General sanitation and cleanliness are imperative. The bull, the semen, and the mount animal must be

handled individually during collection and separate semen collection equipment must be used on each individual bull. Use of these measures reduces the potential for transmission of possibly infectious or contagious material from bull to bull.

All animals are to receive a physical exam and be tested negative for several diseases prior to entering the isolation unit of the bull stud. The isolation unit is to be effectively separated from the resident bull population and personnel traffic is to be controlled to greatly reduce the possibility of disease transmission. Equipment used in the isolation facility for bull handling, semen collection, feeding, watering and manure disposal must be separate from that used for resident bulls.

Repeated tests for bovine venereal diseases as well as retests for several other diseases are completed during the isolation interval to provide assurance that the bull is not harboring certain contagious or potential semen-borne disease agents.

Since the reliability of the test results are only as good as the laboratory or person performing the tests, CSS requires all tests

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to be conducted in a manner generally consistent with procedure established by the American Assn. of Veterinary Laboratory Diagnosticians.

Following successful completion of the isolation test protocol, the semen that was collected during the isolation interval may be marketed and, if appropriate, the bull may be transferred to the resident bull herd. Thereafter, tests for the diseases specified by CSS are performed at regular intervals, usually every six months.

The specific testing procedures for each disease may be obtained from Certified Semen Services, P.O. Box 1033, Columbia, Mo. 65205.

Control of certain diseases by artificial insemination does not "just happen." Various semen processing procedures, such as the addition of antibiotics to extended semen, do not necessarily assure the elimination of semen-borne diseases. That is why continuous hygiene of the A.I. center and the semen collection/processing procedures are necessary, along with a competent and regular bull health testing program.

The use of A.I. for controlling the spread

of bovine veneral diseases, as well as preventing the transmission of other potential semen-borne pathogens, has been quite successful. This record of success, however, could not have been achieved without the concerted efforts of those many bull studs who have instituted and maintained well organized bull health testing programs for

many years.

The CSS logo is the means by which you can identify A.I. studs who, as a service to their customers, have volunteered to be audited by an objective third party to insure their bulls are free of these semen transmissible diseases.

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