



The DCCT Newsletter

Winter Sacrifice Fields

By Dwight and Shannon Hambly. Dwight is the Western-Tennessee Regional Representative. He and Shannon own Red Hill Dexter Farm.

At Red Hill Dexter Farm, we are by no means experts when it comes to cattle, and we have had to learn many things over the last few years—typically the hard way. Although, many Dexter owners have discovered what works well for them, we are still a work in progress, learning and developing daily, therefore, we are always happy to share our experiences with others who are new to this “cattle thing,” with hopes to help someone save money and precious time.

We began our Dexter cattle journey with two cows and a small bull, but our little herd and farm have quickly grown much larger and faster than we expected in the beginning. We started with an almost 42-acre farm with little land cleared, and with no real set-up for cattle.

Over the last few years we began clearing fields and seeding many divided lots, all separated into nice large rotational grazing fields. In the spring and summer months we discovered beautiful green grass the first few years, which quickly died out in the fall, requiring us to start feeding hay in October. In the past, we have usually chosen two or three fields for our cattle for the winter months, with no real thought process put into the fields we chose. Our nicest fields have been typically used for the winter, allowing our cattle to have a vast open range to enjoy over the winter months. Every time we moved hay rolls into our winter pastures, we set them in different locations, thinking this was a helpful practice. We assumed by setting each in a different location, this would allow the previously seeded areas in the fields to still re-coup, which would bring on beautiful green grass in the spring, and it did just that for the first few years, then issues began to set in.

What issues did we unknowingly create? First, we had lots of mud, and secondly, this past spring and summer a new issue sprung up: **WEEDS!**

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File Photo

The first few years we had nice grass with sparse weeds throughout the fields, but this year we discovered a weed epidemic, plus areas of rotting hay piled up and have proven difficult to remove, killing the grass under these piles.

We needed to make some quick changes, so we spoke with local farmers and brought out an agricultural major from our local college to explore the fields. Each gave us their input on recuperating and renewing these fields for the next year. Unknowingly, they all repeated each other:

“No matter how nice the hay is that you buy, it all has weeds and weed seeds.” Through the winter months, weeds and their seeds are scattered throughout pastures when cattle pull the hay onto the ground from hay feeders. Some of the hay and weeds go uneaten and lie in different areas. Snow, wind, and rain transfer these weeds throughout the fields, eventually resulting in more weeds in additional areas.

This year we hope to improve this situation because we have changed our winter practice. We have chosen to plot out two sacrificial fields this year: each is about two acres; one is for our herd of 15, and one is for our friend’s herd. The fields are smaller than our warm-weather pastures, and our cattle will not be allowed to return to the larger fields again until spring. We are sacrificing two small fields and there will be less animal freedom during the winter months, but we are hoping this sacrifice will be exchanged for improved spring, summer, and fall fields each year, equaling happy cattle during all months.

Beginning this past summer, in preparation for the winter months and next spring, all fields were sprayed, and in some cases weeds were burned, which has proven to be very time consuming and a process we hope not to repeat yearly. In addition, we seeded all fields with a good mixture of 100% *weed-free seed*, fertilized everything, and then all cattle were removed from these summer pastures.

Cattle that stand in deep mud are at greater risk for foot rot, cold stress, and injuries, so we also brought in gravel for heavily trafficked areas such as watering spots, with hopes to decrease some of our mud issues. We are hoping these actions will cut down not only on weed transfer but also mud and rotting hay in the winter sacrifice fields. Our overall expectations are that these actions will reduce tractor ruts caused from driving through sacrifice fields to place hay, decrease mud that our cattle had been standing in daily in the past, and in the end, allow the summer fields to flourish, creating healthy fields to last our Dexters well into December. Over the next few years the improved pastures should bounce back in early spring, producing nice green grass and cutting our hay usage down considerably in the future.

In addition, these sacrifice fields will have hay strategically placed with each setting. We will also drag the fields more often to remove manure and discarded hay, not allowing any to set within the fields, and if ruts happen, it’s a winter sacrifice field, so no worries. We will plow the winter sacrifice fields totally at the end of winter, plant new seed, scatter fertilizer, and allow them to rest all summer long in preparation for the next winter. Our expectations for spring 2018 and 2019 will be to open a gate to beautiful fields where happy cattle can run on thick green grass-carpeted fields which have a huge reduction in weeds and will last long past what we have experienced over the last few years. We will be happy to share our experience next year, allowing everyone to know how this works for us and our cattle. Our fingers are crossed for nice fields of thick green grass next spring!

NOTE: This article: <https://extension.umd.edu/sites/extension.umd.edu/files/docs/Sacrifice%20Lots.pdf> reports sacrifice lots should be graded to drain well, located close to a barn and pastures, appropriately sized for the herd, have a nearby manure storage structure, and consideration should be given to planning a **green sacrifice lot** by planting a cover crop. Read the article for more details and strategies!

BEEF—It's What's for Dinner!

Selling Beef in TN?



There are many ways to market your delicious home raised beef!

- Farm to Consumer by the half or whole (consumer must purchase that portion of the animal “live”)
- By the cut at farmers’ markets (see below)
- Retail markets / restaurants
- Advertise on the DCCT website
- Start a Cooperative Group (see questionnaire in this issue!)

According to the Tennessee Department of Agriculture, to sell farm raised beef at a venue such as a farmers’ market:

- Requires a \$50 Food Establishment/Retail Meat Sales Permit and TDA inspection (T.C.A. § 53-8-207). The permit must be posted where meat sales occur.
- The permit is acceptable for “retail meat sale” only. Products sold for the purpose of resale to restaurants, grocery stores, or other retail outlets will be regulated by USDA.
- Animals must be processed at a USDA inspected facility which is credentialed for the animal to be processed. Meat must be processed, packaged, and labeled at the USDA facility.
- Labels are to be approved by on-site USDA personnel, and at a minimum, must include the name of product, complete address of individual offering meat for sale, and net weight lot/code numbers are recommended. Other information under weights and measures is required. Meat items are sold by weight reflected in a price per pound. The price per pound, the total weight, and the total price are required to be on the label.
- Meat must be transported in a secure manner. A freezer or refrigerator operated by inverter is acceptable.
- Cooler/refrigerator/freezer units used for the storage or transportation of meats must be cleanable, and kept clean and in good repair.
- Storage in cooler/refrigerator/freezer units dedicated for the meat offered for sale must be located in a secure area away from potential sources of contamination and be accessible for inspection by TDA. Thermometers are required in coolers/refrigerators to verify temperatures of storage.
- All poultry meat must be stored in a separate cooler/refrigerator/freezer to prevent cross-contamination with meats of other species unless all such stored meat is received and maintained hard frozen.
- No re-freezing of product. If the product is acquired frozen from the processor it must be maintained in a frozen state from the processing facility to the consumer. Refrigerated product must be maintained under 41° F from the processing facility to consumer.
- Hands and outer clothing must be kept clean when handling meat being offered for sale.
- Records of the animal source and the place the consumer purchased the product should be maintained for traceability purposes.

**Regulations are subject to change and it is the responsibility of the vendor to make sure that they remain compliant and up-to-date. During the application process copies of applicable permits will be requested. For further information please visit <http://tn.gov/agriculture/section/ag-licenses>.*

To find a USDA Meat Processor near you in TN, go to:
<https://agriculture.tn.gov/Marketing.asp?QSTRING=USD>

For more ideas on how to make your farm profitable, visit:
<https://ag.tennessee.edu/cpa/Pages/default.aspx>

HERD HEALTH

Health Care advice given here, or anywhere in this publication, is NOT to replace care by a licensed veterinarian. Always Call Your VET if your animals show signs of illness!

CVIs - Who Needs It and What It Is (and Isn't)

Whether you are buying, selling or showing—crossing state lines and sometimes even within your own state—you need to have a CVI. Most states say you must meet or exceed their rules, even if just passing through!

- ***What it is-*** CVI stands for a Certificate of Veterinary Inspection, also called a “Health Certificate.” It is NOT a certification of health! It is simply a record of the specific animals on a shipment. The animals must meet certain criteria which is recorded by a veterinarian, depending on the destination state.
- ***Official Permanent Identification*** - USDA 840 tags are accepted in all states as official ID. Some states still allow tattoos if accompanied by a registration certificate to match. Some venues are now demanding not only USDA 840 tags but they must be the electronic ones that are ISO compliant.
- ***Other Identification*** - After the Official ID is recorded, there is a space for “other ID.” This would be registration number, farm ear tag info, color of animal, etc.
- ***Age/Breed/Sex*** - This is where the veterinarian completes the general information on the specific animal. There are codes used for each breed. Dexters are DR. There are different rules for different aged animals, so the vet needs to know specifics. Sex is either F (cow or heifer); M (bull); or C/M (steer).
- ***Tests*** - Some states demand Brucellosis, TB, and/or Trich (*trichomoniasis*) before any bovine can enter their state.
- ***Responsibility*** - The seller's veterinarian is responsible for complying with the destination state's regulations.

What Is a Trich Test and Just WHAT Is Trich?

(Modified from a WSU Veterinary Extension article that you can read in its entirety here: <http://vetextension.wsu.edu/.../03/TrichSpotlight2011.pdf>)

Trichomoniasis, sometimes called “**Trich**” (pronounced trick), is a common sexually transmitted infection (STI) that affects both females and males, but symptoms are more common in females. Trich is caused by the single-celled protozoan parasite, *Trichomonas*. It is an important cause of economic loss in cattle operations that use natural service.

The parasite transmission rate from male to female at breeding may be as high as 42%, which means there can be a 42% loss of the calf crop. Affected bulls carry the protozoa in their preputial sheath and penis. The affected cows harbor the organism in the vagina and uterus.

The affected bull shows no clinical signs. The parasite does not affect semen quality or sexual behavior. The infected bull breeds cows as normal bulls do and transmits the infection during breeding. In cows, Trich presents in two forms. In the first, the affected cow may become pregnant, undergoes early embryonic death and cycles regularly without showing any signs. In this scenario the Trich problem is realized only at pregnancy diagnosis, with a higher number of open cows than normal. In the other form, the affected cow cycles regularly and builds immunity after 3 cycles. The immunity is short lived and cows can get re-infected and abort during one-third to mid-gestation if they become pregnant. In both forms, cows may develop pyometra (a pus filled uterus with no signs of cycling), another sign that can be observed at pregnancy diagnosis.

No treatment is available for bovine trichomoniasis which makes identifying bulls with trichomoniasis well before breeding season vital. Given lack of legal treatment and lifelong nature of most bull infections, test and slaughter of infected bulls is recommended, and in fact mandatory in several states.

Key Points • Trichomoniasis is a parasite spread during breeding from an infected bull to a cow and from an infected cow to a bull. Cows can miscarry, resulting in a disappointing breeding season and low calf crop. The only way to prevent entry into a herd is through the testing of bulls before breeding. In TN, only specific state-certified veterinarians can take official Trich samples. Trich testing makes economic sense

Trich tests can be done at UT. It is not a terribly invasive test and costs less than \$100. The bull may kick and be sensitive for a day or two, but it will not affect his breeding ability.



DCCT Membership Questionnaire 2017

Please **PRINT, complete, and return to DCCT by scan/email to dcct.president@gmail.com or your regional rep listed on the first page of this newsletter. Or mail to DCCT, 320 Buckner Rd., Philadelphia, TN 37846**

Part 1 - Beef

1. Are you interested in selling your home-raised beef? Yes No
2. Do you have animals now that will be ready to harvest in 2018? Yes No
3. Do you have land available to graze animals that can be harvested in 2018-2019? Yes No
4. Are you interested in acquiring animals to raise specifically to harvest in 2018-2019? Yes No
5. Are you interested in leasing pasture for co-owning conditions of animals to be raised to harvest? Yes No
6. Are you interested in having DCCT form a beef marketing alliance that may or may not: co-own animals being raised for harvest, and form a cooperative system for grazing, transporting, and purchasing harvest animals? Yes No
7. Do you have connections with a restaurant, chef, or caterer that may be interested in beef if it can be provided in a manner that would meet their product demand? Yes No

Part 2 - Youth

1. Do you have children or grand children interested in the cattle industry? Yes No
2. Are you willing to host a 1 day clinic at your farm for interested youth? Yes No
3. Are you interested in the possibility of donating a calf to a DCCT youth participant in 2018 or 2019? Yes No
4. Do you have ideas on how the club should go about attracting youth participants? Yes No (if yes please add notes)
5. Do you know any youth that would like to show cattle if given the opportunity (and the cattle)? Yes No

Part 3 - Club

1. Do you feel an emailed newsletter is an important perk of being a DCCT member? Yes No
2. Would having the newsletter available on the Facebook group instead of email be sufficient? Yes No
3. Would it be in the Club's best interest to expand and include all breeds rather than just Dexters? Yes No
4. Do you have ideas or a desire to host a DCCT event at your farm or nearby venue? Yes No (if yes please add note)
5. Do you visit the DCCT website often (once a week or more)? Yes No
6. Do you visit the DCCT group on FB often (once a week or more)? Yes No
7. Would you be willing to serve on a committee, as an officer, or as a regional rep in the future of DCCT? Yes No
8. Do you feel a monthly newsletter should continue in the same format as it is currently? Yes No
9. Should DCCT funds be used to advertise the Club and or Cattle in regional or National publications? Yes No

NOTES: (please add paper if need be)

Thank You For Participating. Please send this out today. We look forward to your input!