



BULL BREEDING SOUNDNESS EXAMINATIONS

The bull's contribution to pregnancy rates in both dairy and beef herds is often overlooked with the focus being on cow fertility. Bulls may only represent a small part of the breeding stock but are responsible for half of the fertility. Breeding a large number of cows in a short breeding season requires fertile bulls; it is not unreasonable to expect a fully fertile bull running with a breeding group of 40-50 normally cycling, disease-free cows to achieve average pregnancy rates to each service of 60%. This means that 95% of the cows should be pregnant in a 9-10 week mating period.

Although very few bulls are sterile, a significant percentage have reduced fertility. Studies have shown that 20% or more of unselected breeding bulls may be classed as sub-fertile, and thus fail to perform optimally, which has a profound effect on profitability.

Breeding Soundness Examination (BSE) is performed to identify bulls with reduced fertility. The following topics will be covered in a full Breeding Soundness Examination:

1. History and health status

The history of the bull is important as there are a number of factors that may influence fertility that are not easily measured in a single examination. Information about age, vaccination, previous performance, origin and results of laboratory tests will be required.

Owners must also observe bulls to be sure that they follow cows that are in heat and show interest (libido check). It is important to observe that the bull is capable of breeding, as some bulls have physical problems that prevent intromission in the vagina, let alone successful mating.

2. Physical examination

The examination is divided into a general examination, and an examination of the reproduction tract. The general examination considers size relative to age, and detection of abnormalities in feet, legs and eyes that would reduce the ability of a bull to move and breed cows.

The reproductive tract is checked by examination of the scrotum, testicles, penis, prepuce and the accessory sex organs. These structures are examined externally (both visually and by manual palpation) and where appropriate by internal examination. Scrotal circumference will be measured, and has been determined to be the measurement that best predicts the output of sperm cells for bulls. It has also been linked with offspring fertility

3. Semen collection and examination

If required a semen sample will be collected, usually by electro-ejaculation. We will then assess the semen visually before examining the sample through a microscope. Sub-samples are evaluated for motility and morphology.

Every section will be present in a final report which says whether the bull is a Satisfactory Potential Breeder or not.

**BREEDING SOUNDNESS EXAMINATIONS SHOULD ALSO BE USED FOR TESTING RAMS
PRIOR TO TUPPING**

**THE FARM ANIMAL PRACTICE IS ABLE TO OFFER BREEDING SOUNDNESS EXAMS FOR
BOTH BULLS AND RAMS.**

Price: Bull £97.34 Ram £33.42

Price reduction if semen sample is not required

Please Contact the Farm Animal Practice for more Information
