



SECTION

07

**BRINGING YOUR NEW
BULL HOME**

Summary

- Bulls are a large investment, so spend a little time making sure they adjust to their new environment, are fit, free from disease and actively working.
- Consult with your veterinarian and draw up a policy for treating bulls and schedule an annual BBSE pre mating.

Health and handling considerations

It is wise to set up an annual BBSE (Bull Breeding Soundness Evaluation) and health treatment programme with your veterinarian for all your breeding bulls. The more information you have on a bull's reproductive and structural soundness, the greater the guarantee of him leaving you offspring. This applies equally to young bulls as when you're buying mixed-age sires.

A standard BBSE can include:

- Serving capability
- Serving capacity
- Semen evaluation, including a full morphology
- Palpation of the testicles and reproductive tract
- Measuring scrotal size

At purchase, check the animal health status of the bull breeder's herd before you buy. This is especially relevant when purchasing from areas where TB is prevalent.

Bovine Viral Diarrhoea (BVD) has become an endemic disease in New Zealand and can cause serious financial losses in breeding herds. It is wise to only purchase bulls that have been tested BVD-antigen negative and are vaccinated against the disease. An annual vaccination is required following the two initial sensitising vaccinations.

Temperament is a major factor to check when you buy bulls. Inspect them in the yards or paddock before sale and note any unusual behaviour or activity. Note bulls that are continually pushing to the centre of a mob, running around, unreasonably nervous, aggressive or excited. This behaviour should be written down in the sale catalogue and referred to during the auction. At the sale, note any changes of temperament by individual bulls. Some bulls which are quiet in the yard or paddock may not like the pressure and noise of the auction and become excited. Others that were excited before get much worse in the sale ring and can really perform. Using the yard or paddock behaviour as a guide, rather than the temperament shown in the ring, you can often buy such bulls cheaper, provided they were satisfactory in other respects.

When you buy a new bull for your herd, you can reduce problems by getting him settled in properly in his new environment. Bulls of all breeds can become upset and excited in the sale and delivery process. They are subjected to strange yards, different noises, loss of their mates, different people, different handling

methods, trucking, unloading, new paddocks and different water and feed. This combination can be enough to upset even quiet animals. New bull buyers are often concerned about the apparent bad temperament of a bull that seemed quiet enough when purchased. Understanding why bulls become upset and reducing these causes of stress allows them to settle down quickly.

Delivery

At auction sales, possession is yours after the fall of the hammer, so careful treatment of animals from then on is important. Sometimes, the vendors provide insurance against loss in transit, accidental loss of use or infertility. However, insurance is usually the responsibility of the buyer.

When you buy a bull, ask what health treatments he has received. Knowing what has been done can reduce any future health treatments.

When you use a professional carrier:

- Make sure they know which bulls can be mixed together.
- Discuss resting procedures for long trips, expected delivery time, truck condition and quiet handling by the carrier.
- Ensure you give explicit instructions on the delivery docket. Important details include ear tag details and/or brand numbers, your address and your contact telephone numbers.
- When buying bulls from distant locations you may have to fit in with other delivery arrangements to reduce cost. You should make it clear how you want your bulls handled.

Arrival

When the bulls arrive home, unload them at the yards into a group of quiet stock – for example, steers or herd cows. Never jump them from the back of a truck into a paddock. Bulls from different origins should be put into separate areas with other cattle for company.

Provide feed and water, then leave them alone until the next morning. The bulls should then receive routine health treatments. Bulls should be drenched and held in the yards for 24 hours to prevent introducing worms and, if necessary, treated for lice. Horned bulls should be well tipped to allow easier working through yards and races.

A bull's behavior will decide how quickly he can be separated and moved out to paddocks.

New bulls should be paddocked separately from older bulls to avoid fighting and the risk of injury.

The new bull may be paddocked with the older bulls after their first mating.