**Digital Dermatitis** is often referred to as hairy heel warts and is a common infectious foot disease in dairy and beef cattle herds.

- Digital dermatitis has been reported on 70 percent of all U.S. dairies, and on 95 percent of large operations (500+ cows). a
- The size and scope of digital dermatitis within the beef industry is undetermined but is a growing concern.
- The disease often leads to lameness, which decreases milk production and fertility in dairy animals. In beef, lameness can account for 70 percent of all sales of non-performing cattle. b

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**Description**

Raw, bright-red or black circular erosion of the skin above the heel bulbs, with edges forming a white margin that surrounds sores or is adjacent to thick, hairy, wart-like growths.

**Pathogenesis**

Weakening of the skin barrier, due to mechanical irritation and hyper hydration. Poor hygiene results in mixed infection with different bacteria, among them *Treponema* species, in a low-oxygen environment. Infection of the dermis leads to or results in acute inflammation – ulcerative dermatitis. Acute stage may develop into chronic forms characterized by thickening and proliferation of the epidermis (hairy warts).

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**Risk Factors**

- Introducing new animals into the herd (biosecurity)
- Poor hygiene, such as muddy pens and inadequate footbath programs
- Foot insult/injury, chemical/physical skin trauma
- Early lactation cows and young cattle with potential nutritional deficiencies

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**Complications**

- Wall and toe abscesses
- Pre-mammary dermal sores
- Layered heel horn erosion and abnormally shaped claws
- Poor hygiene in interdigital space

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