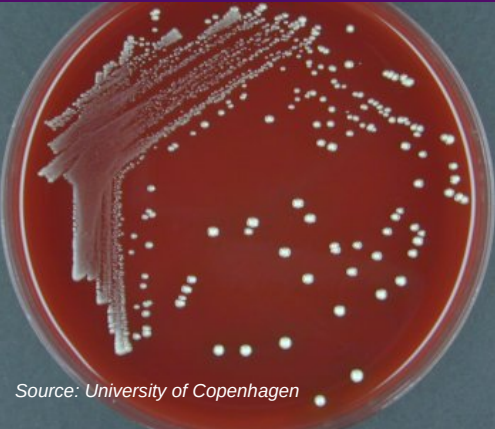


# FOOT ROT (INTERDIGITAL NECROBACILLOSIS)



## CAUSES

Foot rot is caused by various bacteria, the most common of which is *Fusobacterium necrophorum*.

- While it usually occurs as sporadic individual cases, outbreaks can occur.
- All ages of cattle are susceptible.
- Infected feet are the source of infection, but the bacteria can survive in the soil. Bacteria infect feet through abrasions or damage to the skin between the toes.
- Wet, humid weather causing muddy ground and wet, dirty bedding, rough ground, and high stocking density increase the risk of disease.

**FOOT ROT IS THE MOST COMMON CAUSE OF LAMENESS IN BEEF HERDS, AND THE 2ND MOST TREATED DISEASE IN WEANED CALVES AND ADULT CATTLE.**

## CLINICAL SIGNS

- Animals are usually severely lame in one limb, putting very little weight on the leg.
- The foot is swollen between and above the claws at the coronary band. The skin between the claws may have a crack covered in dead tissue, and the foot will have a foul odor.
- Animals may have a mild fever (39-40°C).
- Affected bulls may show temporary infertility and cows may have a temporary drop in milk production.
- If left untreated, the infection may spread to the joints and tendon sheaths.



**PROMPT TREATMENT OF FOOT ROT CAN RESULT IN A POSITIVE RESPONSE!**

## TREATMENT

Immediate treatment after the onset of swelling and lameness typically results in an excellent response. In outbreaks, footbaths with copper sulfate and/or feed medication with tetracyclines may be effective in controlling the disease. For those cattle with secondary joint infections or chronic foot rot, consider culling or humane euthanasia.

**Always consult your veterinarian about treatment strategies.**



## PREVENTATIVE MANAGEMENT

Foot Rot can be prevented by reducing the risk of foot injuries (e.g., fixing corrals, eliminating garbage in pastures), ensuring even footing in cattle handling areas, and keeping bedding areas, pens, and barns clean and dry. Consult your veterinarian for advice on prevention, treatment, and control, including the use of footbaths.

## VACCINATION

**Foot Rot (i.e., *Fusobacterium necrophorum*) is considered a risk-based vaccine.**

A commercial vaccine is available in Canada, but the vaccine's effectiveness has not been well established in controlled field trials. Discuss with your veterinarian whether to use the vaccine and its potential cost benefit in your herd.