

## Ringworm

**CAUSE:** Ringworm is not a worm; it is a fungus that infects skin and hair. Several pathogenic fungal organisms cause ringworm. The one most common in cattle is *Tricophyton verrucosum*.

**EFFECT:** The infection causes patches of hair loss and gray scaling or crusted lesions, most commonly around the head and neck.

**How is Ringworm spread?** Direct contact between healthy and infected animals will spread the disease. Also, spores from the lesions are shed via hairs or scabs. The spores can survive in the environment for years.

**How can Ringworm be prevented?** Disinfecting and cleaning barns and equipment will help prevent ringworm. Use a strong detergent, then a 1 to 3 part bleach to water solution. Painting rough surfaces can reduce the spore load in the environment.

**Does Ringworm affect people?** Yes, ringworm can infect skin anywhere on the body and often results in a classic red ring around the site of infection, hence the name.

**What if there is an outbreak?** The infection will naturally resolve in young, otherwise healthy animals. Animals with abnormally functioning immune systems may have trouble fighting off the infection. Topical treatments are available, but rarely used.

**For more information on ringworm, see:**

[Purdue University Cooperative Extension Service: Ringworm of Cattle](#)

The Merck Veterinary Manual: [Dermatophytosis \(Ringworm\)](#) in [Cattle](#), [Horses](#), [Pigs, Sheep, and Goats](#)