

300 pigs die of swine fever in Masaka, quarantine imposed

Action. Veterinary experts have been sent to the affected area to contain the outbreak.

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MASAKA. Quarantine has been imposed on the movement of pigs in and out of Kimanya/Kyabakuza Division in Masaka District following the outbreak of African swine fever that has left more than 300 pigs dead.

The fever is a contagious viral infection that spreads rapidly in pig populations.

This disease has hit the area at a time when district health authorities are also battling Avian Influenza type H5N1 which was confirmed in the district last weekend.

Dr Mukasa Kirumira, the district deputy veterinary officer, confirmed that they had imposed quarantine on the movement of pigs in and out of in Kimanya/Kyabakuza Division and on the sale of its products to avert the spread of the disease.

"Our team of veterinary experts has been dispatched to the affected area to contain the outbreak. We are expecting good results from them and we urge farmers to cooperate by reporting to us any new cases," Dr Mukasa said in an interview on Tuesday.

Dr Kirumira said the first cases of swine fever were first reported at Mwalo village in Kimanya-Kyabakuza Division last week where Ms



Affected. One of the pigs that died as a result of swine fever. PHOTO BY CHRISTOPHER KISEKKA

Fiona Kataama, a piggery farmer lost more than 300 pigs.

Dr Kirumira said they took blood samples of the dead and sick pigs to Entebbe Virus Research Centre and it was confirmed that the pigs died of swine fever.

"We ask our farmers not to be allowed to let their pigs wander from village to village. If the pigs roam around, they can easily spread the disease to other areas," he said.

Dr Kirumira also said the infection has persistently spread due to farmers' reluctance to adhere to the set preventive precautions estab-

lished. However, the veterinary official expressed dismay over some

SYMPTOMS

Dr Mukasa Kirumira says an infected pig shows signs of high fever, loss of appetite and laboured breathing. Between two to three days, the animal loses strength to stand due to paralysis in the legs. Local farmers can manage the disease by confining their herds, restricting their movements, burying carcasses of the infected pigs, and carry out preliminary disinfection.

pork dealers who are still flocking the area to cheaply buy the animals from farmers who are afraid of losing their animals to the disease.

"It is very unfortunate that people don't want to follow guidelines. We are going to deploy a surveillance team of veterinary extension workers to try and sensitise those people," he added.

Mr Michael Lugemwa, a pork seller at Ssaza Trading Centre, asked the district veterinary officer to monitor pig slaughter centres to verify that it is not infected with any disease.