

Public warned as unsafe meat hits Lyantonde

Numbers. Between four and six dead cows are reportedly ferried to Lyantonde Town every day.

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Voices



"I can no longer buy meat from local meat stalls until government gives us assurance that foot and mouth disease is contained. I doubt every meat I find on the stalls because I see people ferrying dead animals to the town."

VIOLA NAMUYABA,
RESIDENT OF KALIRO
A, LYANTONDE TOWN
COUNCIL



"Let people help us report those selling such meat. Once we get information, we shall definitely raid their stalls and prosecute the owners."

SULAIMAN
TIGARAGARA MATOJO,
LYANTONDE DC



"FMD was detected on my farm, but no extension worker has ever visited the farm despite making several telephone calls to them."

FLORENCE NAMARA
KABAHUUMA,
LYANTONDE SUB-
COUNTY COUNCILLOR

LYANTONDE. Residents of Lyantonde District have been warned against buying unsafe meat.

The warning follows reports about the sale of meat of suspected sick and dead animals in the area.

The hazardous meat, although cheaper, exposes consumers to grave health risks, medical experts have warned.

Ordinarily, a kilogramme of meat costs between Shs8,000 and Shs10,000 but the meat of sick and dead animals is being sold at as low as Shs3,000.

The meat with questionable health standards is sold mainly at meat stalls at Market Street that are frequented by food vendors and restaurant owners.

According to health experts, such meat causes brucellosis, an infection that affects mainly animals, and is expensive to treat.

According to Dr Kabugo Blasio, a general practitioner at Bulamu Medical Clinic in Masaka, people in cattle rearing areas such as Lyantonde and Kiruhura districts are at a high risk of catching Brucella because they have a practice of taking raw milk and its products such as ghee and cheese.

"If any person eats raw milk products and undercooked meat from infected or gets into contact with their secretion, they are likely to contract this bacterial disease," says Dr Kabugo.

A cattle dealer, who is privy to this illegal business, but requested not to be named to speak freely, says four to six dead cows are ferried into Lyantonde Town every day without the knowledge of health inspectors.

"All the meat sold at various meat stalls has to bear a stamp of the health inspector but the meat from dead animals sold by unscrupulous butchers doesn't bear such a stamp. It is transported mainly in milk cans on boda bodas and pick-up trucks from the neighbouring districts of Kiruhura and Sembabule," he says.

He adds: "What is causing panic here is that the areas where they get such meat are under quarantine following an outbreak of foot and mouth disease (FMD)".

The cattle dealer says this situation has affected the demand for dairy products in hotels and restaurants in Lyantonde Town since many residents in the town have resorted to eating ground nuts, fish and vegetables to avoid contracting diseases associated with FMD infection.

"Though I can afford meat, I cannot risk asking for meat in restaurants because dead meat is on the market," says Mr James Kamuhangire, a resident of Lyantonde Town.

Quarantined

Lyantonde District was in May placed under quarantine following an outbreak of FMD disease in the area. The quarantine bars the slaughter-



Risky. A man ferries meat of suspected sick animals on a boda boda from Kiruhura District to Lyantonde District recently.

PHOTO BY PAUL
SSEKANDI

KEY ISSUES

Measure. Lyantonde District was in May placed under quarantine following an outbreak of foot and mouth disease in the area. The quarantine bars the slaughtering of cattle and transportation of its products in the district.

Defiance. Local leaders recently defied the government directive to enforce quarantine, claiming that the closure of cattle markets had adversely affected residents in the district since 90 per cent of households entirely depend on their cattle for a livelihood.

Fear. More than 117 cows are at the verge of death in Rwempogo Village in Nakashashara Sub-county, Kiruhura District, which borders Lyantonde, but livestock farmers continue to sell their animals, according to Mr Joseph Jijuko,

products in the district.

However, local leaders recently defied the government directive to enforce quarantine, claiming that the closure of cattle markets had adversely affected residents in the district since 90 per cent of households entirely depend on their cattle for a livelihood.

Dr Edward Ssekawojwa, the Lyantonde District veterinary officer, says the quarantine is still on, but the district simply allowed meat dealers to slaughter only inspected animals from within the district and ignore those ferried from neighbouring districts like Kiruhura and Sembabule.

"The quarantine was partly lifted and cattle dealers in Lyantonde were asked to register and get fresh permits allowing them to transport and

"In our case, the quarantine was imposed not because Lyantonde had FMD. Our animals are not infected though the situation is still fragile," Dr Ssekawojwa says.

Commenting on the meat from dead animals being sold in the district, Dr Ssekawojwa says he needs more time to investigate the matter.

"There are some unscrupulous people who have infiltrated that business (meat) and it could be possible that they are the ones doing that but we are going to investigate the matter and whoever will be caught selling meat without our stamp will be prosecuted," he warns.

Traders warned

He also cautions meat traders against displaying meat in the open places where it attracts flies and other insects.

A trader, who preferred anonymity, says a dead cow costs between Shs50,000 and Shs200,000.

"I cannot accept to make a total loss. I sell my sick animal between Shs50,000 and Shs200,000 and at least get money to buy drugs to treat others," he says.

Ms Florence Namara Kabahuuma, a councillor for Lyantonde Sub-county, says FMD is still a public health threat in the area and wonders why authorities are not taking the matter seriously.

"FMD was detected on my farm, but no extension worker has ever visited the farm despite making several telephone calls to them," she says.

SHS3000

THE PRICE CHARGE PER
KILOGRAMME OF SICK
AND DEAD ANIMALS IN
LYANTONDE DISTRICT

More than 117 cows are at the verge of death in Rwempogo Village, Nakashashara Sub-county Kiruhura District, which borders Lyantonde, but livestock farmers continue to sell their animals, according to Mr Joseph Jijuko, the Lyantonde District vice chairperson.

Sick animals ferried

Mr Clement Tuuma, a resident of Kaliro Sub-county, Lyantonde District, says some sick cattle are ferried from other areas and kept at a farm near his.

"All this mess is blamed on him (Dr Ssekawojwa) because he has failed to do his work," he claims.

Vigilance

Mr Sulaiman Tigaragara Matojo, the Lyantonde District Resident Commissioner, asks town dwellers to be vigilant and report all those dealing in contaminated meat.

"Let people help us report those selling such meat because it is a big health hazard. Once we get information, we shall definitely raid their