

Three pupils succumb to rabies in Kagadi

KAGADI

By Andrew Musinguzi

The residents of five villages of Bwikara sub-county in Kagadi district, have resolved to kill over 50 stray rabid dogs in the area.

The canines have caused the death of three children in less than two months.

In a meeting convened by Bwikara sub-county chairperson Godad Tumwebaze on Sunday, residents from the affected villages complained that rabid dogs have become a menace.

"We have so far lost three primary school children aged between five and 14 in separate incidents from bites by rabid dogs loitering in the area," Tumwebaze said.

"We have tried to encourage people who own domestic animals, mainly dogs and cats, to take them for vaccination. However, most of them are adamant. As such, we have agreed to kill all stray dogs in the area," he told the meeting.

The affected villages are Kiguli, Bugambaihe A and B and Kyanja A and B, which are all in Mairirwe parish.

The latest rabies victim was a Primary Seven pupil, who died at the weekend.

Tumwebaze said the owners



Residents attend a meeting in Kiguli village, Bwikara sub-county on Sunday to chart a way forward for the problem of rabid dogs in the area. Photo by Andrew Musinguzi

of the dogs refused to take them for a mass vaccination exercise, which was conducted by Kagadi veterinary department in collaboration with Bwikara sub-county authorities recently.

He said the rabies-related deaths were reported to Kagadi district veterinary department.

Authorities responded by organising sensitisation and

BETWEEN THE LINES: Residents to kill dogs

■ Three school-going children in Kagadi are dead after being bitten by rabid dogs. The residents are angry and now want all stray canines in the area killed. District authorities say many owners of dogs and cats have refused to take their animals for vaccination.

vaccination programmes.

However, the public response has been disappointing. Only a

few dogs have been taken for vaccination at designated centres in the sub-county.

James Seguya, the Bwikara assistant veterinary officer, said the rising number of rabid dogs in the villages has been due to laxity of their owners to take them for vaccination.

"In spite of our continuous sensitisation through the media and community meetings about the need to vaccinate dogs and cats, some people have refused to respond to our call. In order to curb the death of children caused by dog bites, residents have agreed to kill all dogs in the affected villages," he said.

When contacted, Dr Moses Amany, the acting Kagadi district veterinary officer, said arrangements to bring more drugs for vaccination have been finalised and that all the affected areas will be handled.

"We have been conducting vaccination exercises in all the 18 sub-counties of Kagadi and the exercise is continuing," he said.

Amany said at the moment, drugs are out of stock. However, the responsible ministry is expected to disperse more drugs "because we have alerted them".

Wilbrode Tumuheki, the Bugambaihe LC1 secretary for information, said the three children who died were pupils of Bugambaihe Primary School and Kyanja Primary School.

"As residents of the affected villages, we are concerned about the death of three children without any serious action taken against errant dog owners. We want the Kagadi district veterinary department to intervene to rectify the problem of rabid dogs in our villages," he appealed.

Tumuheki said some other children who had been bitten by dogs have recovered after being treated at Bwikara Health Centre IV.

It was reported that the stray dogs bite children when they are walking to and from school.

Some children are also attacked while playing or on their way to fetch water.

Other cases of rabid dog attacks have been reported in Kakindo sub-county in Kakumiro district, where over 10 children were recently hospitalised and later discharged after recovering.

Rabies is a vaccine-preventable viral disease which occurs in more than 150 countries and territories.

Meanwhile, there was an outbreak of lumpy skin disease recently in three villages of Pacwa sub-county in Kagadi. At least 10 cows died and scores were infected.

Lumpy skin disease is infectious, eruptive and occasionally fatal in cattle.