

Vets warn on foot-and-mouth disease outbreak in West Nile

NEBBI

By Benedict Okethwengu

A suspected outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease has been detected in parts of Nebbi district, putting livestock in danger.

Dr Peter Opio, the Nebbi district veterinary officer, said on Tuesday that the suspected outbreak of the highly contagious viral disease was reported last week.

He said the severe cases have been reported in the two sub-counties of Nyaravur and Atego.

"We have registered six cases of a suspected outbreak. From clinical diagnosis, the animals are showing signs and symptoms of the disease," Opio said.

Opio, however, said the district has no idea where the disease could be emanating from.

The most disastrous foot-and-mouth disease outbreak that left

many animals dead in Nebbi was reported three years ago.

Foot-and-mouth disease is a severe, highly contagious viral disease of livestock with significant economic impact.

The disease affects cattle and pigs as well as sheep, goats, and other cloven-hoofed ruminants.

All species of deer and antelope as well as elephants and giraffes are susceptible to Foot-and-mouth disease.

In a susceptible population, morbidity approaches 100%. Intensively reared animals are

Residents called on government to help them vaccinate their animals.

more susceptible to the disease than traditional breeds.

The disease is rarely fatal in adult animals but there is often high deaths in young animals due to myocarditis or lack of milk when the dam is infected by the disease.

Opio urged people in the affected areas and surrounding areas to restrict movement of their cattle in and out of the affected areas.

George Kermundu, a cattle keeper in Parombo sub-county, appealed to the Government to intervene by giving out vaccines to avoid the spread of the disease.

Jinaro Ozungu, another cattle keeper in Akworo sub-county, said carrying out massive vaccination against foot-and-mouth disease is relatively expensive for a struggling farmer.

He said a vaccine costs between sh15,000 and sh20,000, which is too high for the farmers.