

CAUSE OF DISEASE

Tick-borne illnesses are caused by infection with a variety of pathogens, including rickettsia and other types of bacteria, viruses and protozoa

By Abdulkarim Ssengendo

President Yoweri Museveni has assured livestock farmers in Kiruhura and the entire country that the Government has procured strong acaricides to eliminate tick-borne diseases. His assurance follows concerns by cattle keepers in Kiruhura that the tick-borne diseases were killing many animals.

The President said the acaricides will be in the country within two weeks and thereafter the Government will start countrywide spraying of animals. He instructed Kiruhura district authorities to ensure that all the farmers have their animals treated.

The President said goats and dogs must also be controlled and sprayed to ensure all the areas are cleansed of ticks. He said after spraying, the Government will turn to zoning as a solution to eradicate tick-borne disease.

The President made the remarks while addressing hundreds of Christians who turned up to attend New Year prayers at St. Emmanuel Cathedral, Rushere in Kiruhura district. He was accompanied by the First Lady and Minister of Education and Sports, Janet Museveni and other family members.

Disease cause

Tick-borne diseases, which afflict humans and other animals, are caused by infectious agents transmitted by tick bites. Tick-borne illnesses are caused by infection with a variety of pathogens, including rickettsia and other types of bacteria, viruses and protozoa.

Acaricides are chemicals used to kill ticks. There has been a public outcry over resistance of ticks to acaricides, especially in districts lying within the cattle corridor, where 90% of the cattle in Uganda are found.

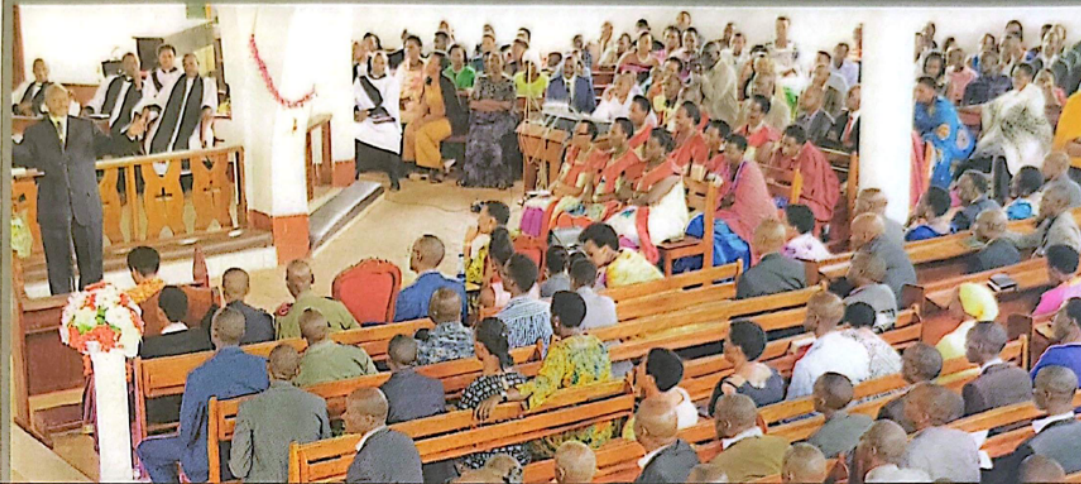
The National Drug Authority mainly attributed the problem to the irrational use of acaricides by farmers.

It has caused death of cattle in the districts of Kiruhura, Bushenyi, Mbarara, Kyegegwa, Ssembabule and Sheema. The agriculture ministry estimates that ticks are responsible for almost 90% of the cattle deaths in Uganda.

The President said the ministry will have statutory instruments which will be used to punish farmers who will refuse to abide by the Government guidelines to eradicate tick-borne diseases. He said the Government will also put limitations on the sale of government drugs.

"Do not get worried about tick-borne diseases; the problem is going to be history. We are implementing plans of procuring acaricides which

Mass spraying of cattle to start, says Museveni



President Yoweri Museveni (far left) speaks to the congregation during a New Year service at St. Emmanuel Cathedral Rushere in Kiruhura district. He said there will be a countrywide spraying of animals. PPU photo

EFFECTS OF DISEASES

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will be here soon. We will also have drugs to prevent diseases such as East Coast Fever," Museveni said.

President's pledges

The President promised to attend and support the North Ankole Diocese Youth Convention by giving them a tractor. He also promised to support the diocese in its planned

construction of a girls' secondary school. Museveni promised to attend a conference organised by youth pioneers of universal primary education in the area and to help them get concessionary loans.

Bishop Namanya had earlier informed Museveni that the loan base in the diocese's savings and credit co-operative society was low, yet people need money.

Museveni called on the clergy to sensitise the public on the dangers of destroying wetlands. He gave an example that the water which the Government supplies to Kiruhura is sourced from the wetlands of Kandekeye, Koga, Munyere and Buhweju, saying if these are destroyed, Lake Kakeya will be affected.

The First Lady reiterated her call for parents to pack food for their school-going children. She also encouraged

the residents to store food to sustain their families in case of food scarcity. She encouraged Christians to develop the spirit of giving tithes to the church to get more blessings from God.

The Nyabushozi MP, Col. Fred Mwesigye, thanked the President for building a strong foundation for peace in Uganda and assured him that people in Kiruhura have income-generating activities, an assurance that Uganda will attain middle income status.

Bishop Namanya thanked the President for appointing Janet as education minister and said she will improve the education ministry just like she developed Karamoja.

The bishop also highlighted achievements of the diocese and said it has distributed 42,000 tree seedlings, 22,000 mango seedlings and 5,000 oranges to the communities.