

Bird Flu: Poultry farmers may lose Shs7b in exports annually

Investigations. Epidemiologists from the Ministry of Agriculture, have started combing landing sites and villages to investigate the magnitude of the problem.

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MASAKA/KAMPALA. Uganda poultry farmers could lose an average of Shs7b as a result of a ban on export of poultry products to Rwanda and Kenya following an outbreak of bird flu in the country last week.

According to Uganda Revenue Authority statistics, Uganda exported poultry products worth Shs7.5 billion in 2016 from Shs5b in 2015.

In 2016, Uganda exported most of its chicken products to Kenya valued at Shs5.2b followed by Rwanda at Shs1.7b. Rwanda and Kenya banned the export of Ugandan chicken products on Monday.

Given the Rwanda ban, Uganda's chicken products that are exported to Burundi will also be affected since most of them are transported by road through Rwanda.

The chairman of Poultry Association of Uganda, Mr Aga Sekalala Jr, put the exported chicken products and chicks to Rwanda and Kenya worth between Shs2b and Shs4b per month.

"Conservative estimate is Shs2b for January. It increases to as high as Shs4b in peak months," Mr Sekalala said yesterday.

The poultry consultant said over the weekend that bird flu will affect their business that has just recovered from the feed crisis that lasted for three months.

Last week, the ministries of Health and Agriculture declared an



Experts. Masked epidemiologists take samples from a bird at Bukakata landing site in Masaka District yesterday. PHOTO BY MARTINS E. SSEKWEYAMA

outbreak of a rare strain of Avian Influenza type H5N1 that hit the districts of Masaka, Kalangala and Wakiso.

In Masaka District, experts from the ministry of Agriculture have

been deployed to the affected areas to carry out further detailed investigations into Avian Influenza infection cases that were reported.

A team of epidemiologists from

started combing landing sites and villages in the most hit sub-county Bukakata in Masaka District to evaluate the magnitude of the problem.

Dr Kenneth Mugabi, a senior veterinary officer in-charge of epidemic animal diseases at the ministry of Agriculture led a team of experts that took fresh samples from affected birds for further examination.

Shs4b

AMOUNT OF MONEY
UGANDA GETS FROM ITS
CHICKEN EXPORTS TO
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"Although the first samples tested positive to the virus, we are going to do additional investigations to establish the magnitude of the problem to guide the ministry's appropriate actions," he said.

The epidemiologists took with them fluids and droppings from the sick ducks and chicken from the landing sites of Lambu and Kachanga that have presented the highest infection cases and bird deaths in the entire Masaka District.

At Lambu Landing Site, the team found visibly infected birds that included chicken, ducks, turkeys and wild-water birds some of which had already died.

Despite the possible danger of the outbreak, there were scenes of