

No money for vaccinating dogs against rabies

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KAMPALA. As stray dogs continue to go on rampage biting people in several districts, the Minister for Agriculture, Mr Vincent Ssempijja, yesterday indicated that his ministry has no funds to buy the rabies vaccine.

“There are many cases of dog bites but the problem is lack of funds. I need to consult with the technical team to know the latest developments,” Mr Ssempijja said.

So far dog bites have been

reported in the districts of Iganga, Kabale, Kagadi, Busia, Arua, Masaka and Mayege.

In Mayege District, Mr Samuel Galubale, working with Kigandalo Health Centre, yesterday said seven people had been attacked by dogs.

He said out of the seven, only one person was found to have been bitten by a vaccinated dog. Mr Galubale said the rest are under threat of being infected with rabies and he appealed to residents with dogs to take them for vaccination against rabies to avoid threats of infecting people. He indicated that unvaccinated dogs pose

a challenge of infecting their victims with rabies, a viral disease that causes acute inflammation of the brain in human beings.

Two children in Masaka District, who were bitten by dogs at the weekend, had managed to receive treatment after they were transferred to Masaka Regional Referral Hospital.

The Health Ministry's Permanent Secretary, Dr Diana Atwine, said yesterday that the anti-rabies serum for those who are bitten by stray dogs was available at the National Medical Stores.

“There are anti-rabies vaccines at NMS and I hope that hospitals requisition for these drugs because they are available,” Dr Atwine said.

She, however, said being expensive medicines, they are sometimes abused by hospitals which do not record any patients in need of the drugs. She further indicated some of the anti-rabies serum gets wasted since they expire before being used.

At private health facilities, the anti-rabies serum costs about Shs150,000 which is expensive for majority of Ugandans living in rural dog-prone areas.