



Museveni meeting scientists from Cuba at State House Entebbe on Tuesday. PPU photo

FIGHTING TICKS

Uganda is to import an anti-tick vaccine with the aim of monitoring and evaluating its efficacy

By Vision Reporter

President Yoweri Museveni has received a team of Cuban scientists who are on a 10-day visit to develop a strategy of bringing the Gavac anti-tick vaccine into the country.

The Cuban team from the Heber Biotec S.A. firm in Havana, is led by Dr Hector Luis Machado Morales and will work with a Ugandan team led by Prof. Anthony Mugisha.

The two teams are expected to concretise the importation of the Gavac anti-tick vaccine under emergency arrangements with the aim of monitoring and evaluating its efficacy.

In his remarks at State House, Entebbe on Tuesday, Museveni urged the scientists to expend their efforts on the fight against

ticks in Uganda.

Mugisha told the President that the programme implementation will target 500,000 cattle starting with the districts which were hit hardest by the ticks and tick-borne diseases in the country.

Uganda is one of the countries ravaged by the tick-borne diseases with more than 30% of the livestock lost.

Affected districts

The districts most affected by the drug-resistant tick-borne diseases include Kiruhura, Bushenyi and Sembabule.

Resistance to the available acaricides was first reported in 2012 with an increase in the number of cattle dying from tick-borne diseases.

The resistance was blamed on poor quality of the acaricides,

but the National Drug Authority (NDA) said that this was only in the case of a counterfeited vaccine, Decatix™, which was in supply in 2013.

NDA and its partners then undertook support missions, visiting farmers and institutions about acaricide use.

These missions revealed that farm practices in acaricide application largely contributed to the problem. Farmers were mixing different acaricides together, changing them very often, using very low to very high concentrations with wrong applicators and prolonged use of one type.

“Super-resistant ticks that are not responsive to all the molecules of acaricides on market have been identified on 68% of the farms that reported the problem in western

and central Uganda,” NDA said during a press briefing in 2016.

In July 2017, the agriculture ministry made trials for use of Vectoclor in Bushenyi district and it proved to be effective.

The drug was able to kill boophilus ticks instantly, but in the case of rhipicephalous and amblyoma, it took more rounds of spraying.

The super team

The state minister for animal industry, Joy Kabatsi, has now constituted an inter-institutional team of scientists from Makerere University College of Veterinary Medicine, the National Agricultural Research Organisation, the agriculture ministry and National Animal Genetic Resource Centre, to work with the Cubans.

Museveni meets Cuban scientists