Anthrax breaks out in Lyantonde

According to Dr Moses Nkanika, the district health officer, four people have so far died of anthrax.

BY WILSON KUTAMBA

The Ministry of Health has confirmed an outbreak of anthrax in Lyantonde District following laboratory results from sampled victims.

According to the Lyantonde District Health Officer, Dr Moses Nkanika, 10 samples were collected from Kasagama, Kaliiro, and Lyantonde sub-counties, of which three tested positive for anthrax, confirming earlier suspicions of the disease outbreak.

Anthrax is caused by a bacteria known as Bacillus anthracis. Humans generally acquire the disease directly or indirectly from infected animals or occupational exposure to affected or contaminated animal products.

Health experts note that anthrax commonly manifests through skin lesions with black centres, severe gastrointestinal complications, and, in advanced cases, respiratory distress.

Dr Nkanika said four people have so far died as a result of the disease, while two confirmed cases are currently receiving treatment at Kasagama Health Centre III.

"We have confirmed anthrax as the cause the deaths reported in the district. Two other patients are currently under medical management. We urge residents to report symptoms early and avoid contact with animals that die suddenly," Dr Nkanika said during an interview on Friday.

He said there are eight separate deaths reported in the sub-counties of Kaliiro and Lyantonde, which are still under investigation to determine their cause.

Surveillance teams from Masaka Regional Referral Hospital are already deployed in the district to support response efforts, including contact tracing and community sensitisation.

Authorities have warned residents against slaughtering and eating meat of sick animals or consuming meat from animals that die under unclear circumstances. The authorities have also urged them to only purchase meat inspected and cleared by veterinary officers.

Livestock farmers in the affected areas have expressed concern over continued animal deaths and the risk of transmission of the disease to humans.

Mr Henry Musasizi, one of the farmers, called for urgent government intervention. "This outbreak is affecting human life and livelihoods. We appeal to the government to urgently roll out livestock vaccination to prevent further losses," he said.

According to Dr Edgar Musiime, the district veterinary department has heightened monitoring of livestock movements and is working closely with health teams to curb the spread of the disease.

"We have already coordinated with farmers in the affected areas who can afford the vaccine to purchase it, while our teams assist with administration. Vaccination in parts of Kasagama began on Friday, February 13, 2026, as we await the arrival of government-provided vaccines," he said

Meanwhile, the Lyantonde Resident District Commissioner, Mr David Asaba Nkojo, said the government has launched emergency public awareness campaigns through local radio stations and community mobilisation.

"Community cooperation is critical in containing this outbreak, and we have intensified public sensitisation to ensure residents remain alert, report suspected cases promptly and avoid self-medication," he said.



Dr Ronald Bameka, the Lyantonde District Veterinary Officer, addresses residents of Kasagama during an anthrax sensitisation meeting.

PHOTO/WILSON KUTAMBA

SURVEILLANCE

Dr Fred Walugembe, the surveillance team head, said their investigations established that most of the affected individuals had touched carcasses of livestock that died mysteriously. With laboratory confirmation in place, he says response measures have intensified to contain further spread of the disease.

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