

Rwanda bans livestock, fruits imports over viral disease

BY NATION TEAM
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RWANDA. Rwanda has banned importation of meat, dairy products, vegetables and fruits from South Africa over listeriosis viral disease, a statement said this week.

The ban, aimed to prevent possible spread of the disease to Rwanda, became effective on December 19, the statement from Rwanda's ministry

of agriculture said.

The death toll from an outbreak of listeriosis has risen to 60 in South Africa, the National Institute for Communicable Diseases (NICD) of South Africa said.

Listeriosis is a serious, but treatable and preventable disease caused by the bacterium, *listeria monocytogenes*, which is widely distributed in nature and can be found in soil, water and vegetation.

Symptoms from the food-borne disease include diarrhoea, fever, general body pains, vomiting and weakness.

Although anyone can get listeriosis, those at high risk of developing severe disease include newborns, the elderly, pregnant women and persons with weak immunity.

Importation of meat, milk and dairy products, vegetables and fruits from South Africa is banned until the

country is declared free of listeriosis, the statement said.

It advised Rwandan farmers and veterinary doctors to quickly report any domestic animals that show signs of the same infection for urgent treatment.

Rwanda imports on average 2.4 tonnes of beef from South Africa monthly for the country's hotels, according to the ministry of agriculture.