

Bird flu spread contained, says ministry

Allegation. Some local leaders in Bukakata have dismissed reports of bird flu outbreak in their area, arguing that it was a creation of some officials in government to fleece tax payers money.

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MASAKA. The Ministry of Health has said it has contained bird flu, which had started spreading in Wakiso, Masaka and Kalangala districts early this month.

However, the quarantine on the transportation of birds in the affected areas will remain in force until further notice.

The director of health services, Dr Anthony Mbonye, while speaking to *Daily Monitor* at the weekend said the ministry hasn't registered any more deaths among migratory birds in the past one week, neither has the disease spread to domestic birds.

"Our latest laboratory tests revealed that the type of avian flu that struck our country is of low pathogenicity than the Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza or Avian flu (H5N1) reported earlier," Dr Mbonye said.

Pathogenicity, according to medical experts, refers to the ability of the virus to produce disease.

Just last week, the Agriculture minister, Mr Vincent Ssempijja, told residents of Bukakata Landing Site



The team. Agriculture minister Vincent Ssempijja (centre) with Kenya's Agriculture Cabinet Secretary, Mr Willy Bett (second right), and other officials at Bukakata Landing Site in Masaka District at the weekend. PHOTO BY BRIAN MUGENYI

that the government has fought the spread of the deadly virus and there's no cause for alarm.

Mr Ssempijja, who was accompanied by Kenya's Agriculture cabinet secretary, Mr Willy Bett, and the Kenyan High Commissioner to Uganda,

Mr Geoffrey Okanga, admitted that the outbreak had negatively impacted on the country's economy.

Kenya recently slapped a ban on poultry imports from Uganda due to the disease outbreak in the country.

"Today, poultry farmers rarely

export birds to countries like Kenya and they too, are very restrictive because what has been taking place here scared them. But the situation has almost improved and very soon, we won't be scared anymore," Mr Ssempijja said.

Mr Bett said as government they [Kenya] haven't officially banned the [importation of poultry] products [from Uganda].

"If businesses are at standstill here, Kenya too is affected. We are here to show solidarity and see how we can alleviate this problem," Mr Bett said.

"We spent the whole of this month without seeing any dead bird here, but ministry of Health reported that more birds died in January. This isn't true. Members on the surveillance teams are after getting allowances, they have continued to exaggerate the matter."

MR CHARLES NTENSIBE, BUKAKATA CHAIRPERSON

However, some local leaders in Bukakata dismissed reports of bird flu outbreak in their area, claiming that it was 'a creation of some officials in government to fleece taxpayers' money'.

According to Mr Charles Ntensibe, the Bukakata LCI chairperson, although government announced that there was massive death of wild birds, it was an exaggeration which could not be backed with facts.

"We spent the whole of this month without seeing any dead bird here, but ministry of Health reported that more birds died in January. This isn't true. Members on the surveillance teams are after getting allowances, they have continued to exaggerate the matter," Mr Ntensibe said.