

Anthrax contained in Kween, Arua, Kiruhura

By Gerald Tenywa

The three districts that were afflicted by an anthrax outbreak last month have got some relief.

According to an agriculture ministry situation report sent on May 18, to the OIE-World Organisation for Animal Health in Paris, France, suspected anthrax killed three people and 24 head of cattle in Arua, Kiruhura and Kween districts.

However, top district officials, including the veterinary doctors and district chairpersons on Tuesday said the situation was under control in their respective areas.

District leaders speak out

In Kween, the district veterinary officer, Dr Nelson Yeshe, said nine people were affected after an anthrax outbreak on April 26, and that four cases of anthrax were confirmed and were being treated.

Four head of cattle that died were buried and the district closed the slaughterhouses, as well as butchers' shops in the affected areas.

"We have not recorded any new cases of anthrax in human beings and cattle. I am sure we have contained the disease," he said.

He attributed the defeat of anthrax to the farmers who contributed money to buy the vaccine against anthrax. He also said the vet doctors in the districts had worked round the clock to vaccinate the animals and also enforce the restrictions put in place to secure the lives of humans and animals.

Robert Twinamatsiko, the district veterinary doctor for Kiruhura, said the disease had been contained.

Dr Sylvia Angubua Baluka, the president of Uganda Veterinary Association, said there was need for public awareness in order to control the spread of the disease. Baluka warned against eating meat from animal carcasses.

According to medical reports, anthrax is caused by the bacteria, *Bacillus anthracis*, which can be picked from the grazing grounds. He said any severe bleeding from the anus, mouth, nostrils and ears should be reported to health authorities —veterinary doctors and medical doctors.

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