

Katakwi leaders warn herdsmen

KATAKWI

By Emmanuel Alomu

The Katakwi LC5 district chairperson, Walter Elakas Okiring, has vowed not to allow Karimojong herdsmen to enter his area of jurisdiction, until they vaccinate all their animals.

During the long dry spell from December to February every year, Karimojong herdsmen invade the neighbouring districts of Amuria and Katakwi in search of water and pasture for their animals.

Elakas said last year, the herdsmen from Karamoja entered Katakwi with foot and mouth disease-infected animals, which later led to the death of cattle in the district.

Besides the infections, Elakas said the water is not enough for the animals in Katakwi and those from the Karamoja sub-region.

According to Elakas, the herdsmen will only be allowed into Katakwi after the local governments of Katakwi and Napak have met and agreed to vaccinate all the animals.

"We want to ensure that animals from Napak are all vaccinated before they cross into Katakwi and the animals here should be treated so that they do not infect those coming in."

The new resident district commissioner (RDC), Hussein Katende Kibazo, said grazing animals from Karamoja in Katakwi is not an offence. He added that any Karimojong herdsmen who misbehaves during the dry spell, will be expelled from the district.

However, the Napak district chairperson, Joseph Lomonyang, yesterday morning said the Iteso and the Karimojong should forget the past by living together harmoniously.

Lomonyang said his district team has been having discussions with



Lotyang Andrew, an official with the cattle branding project in Karamoja. Districts surrounding Karamoja are worried of disease spread during the long dry spell as herdsmen seek pasture and water

the Katakwi leadership, but they (Katakwi officials) had not raised any complaint about the herdsmen or diseases.

"Why is the leadership of Katakwi complaining even before our animals reach there? Amuria district, where our herdsmen have reached, is quiet and accommodative," he wondered.

Lomonyang added that this time round, animals in the district are healthy, according to the district veterinary officers.

A total of 22 kraals with over 3,400 head of cattle had crossed into Kapelebyong sub-county in Amuria

"We want to ensure that animals from Napak are all vaccinated before they cross into Katakwi and the animals here should be treated as well." Katakwi LC5 chairperson

district as of Wednesday last week.

It is also reported that 15 kraals with over 2,000 head of cattle are grazing near the Okok river in Kapelebyong sub-county.

Another seven kraals with about 1,400 head of cattle are currently staying at Omokori village in Okoboi parish, Kapelebyong sub-county.

Richard Enyagu, the representative



Walter Elakas Okiring

of Kapelebyong sub-county in the district council, said the herdsmen who enter Katakwi in search of pasture are mainly from the Jie tribe from Kotido and Bokora from Napak districts.

Enyagu said the two communities have been warned against stealing animals from each other.

Enyagu also cautioned members of the community against leaving harvested groundnuts to dry in the gardens.

He said the herdsmen get tempted to steal such foodstuffs because no one is watching.

Late last year, the Amuria district security committee resolved to dialogue with the leadership in the Karamoja sub-region over animals that are always stolen by the Karimojong herdsmen who go to Teso during the long dry spell in search of pasture and water.

David Ewayu, the district vice-chairperson Amuria, recently said the herdsmen are always welcome to Teso.

However, the community is concerned about the few bad elements among the Karimojong herdsmen who take advantage of the