

Farmers decry lumpy skin disease

MAYUGE

By Betty Angatai

Farmers in Mayuge district have sounded an alarm at an outbreak of lumpy skin disease in their cattle.

The farmers have called on the Government to intervene by providing vaccines and conducting a mass vaccination campaign of cattle in the whole district.

Some of the symptoms of the disease include animals developing lumps on the skin, swollen legs and high temperature, which sometimes lead to death.

Daudi Magala, a resident of Imanyiro village, says they had tried to vaccinate their animals using the common vaccines, but there had not been any improvement. He urged the Government to support the farmers in eliminating the disease.

Jeremiah Mugabi, a resident of Luwanula village, said his animals developed swellings that later started oozing pus.

"By the time the lumps and swollen legs begin to ooze blood and pus, the animal can no longer stand nor move," Mugabi said, adding that the animal also loses appetite.

Efulansi Mutesi, another resident, said her cattle developed lumps, but even though she had informed the veterinary officer, nothing had been done since there were no vaccines.

Andrew Kapeyi, the animal production officer for Imanyiro sub-county, said the disease is viral and contagious.

He said the disease is spread by flies and the lumps are clinical signs of the disease. He called on farmers to secure drugs for vaccination and treatment for those that are already infected, since the Government had not yet provided them.

The Mayuge district veterinary officer, Dr Mathias Kasadha, confirmed the outbreak of lumpy skin disease in the district. He cited Imanyiro, Baitambogwe, Bukatube, Buwaya as the worst hit sub-counties. He also urged farmers to spray their animals to reduce the chances of spreading the disease.

"We are worried that the disease will spread quickly due to lack of vaccines," Kasadha said.

He said the district had not yet received any drugs and vaccines from the Government, adding that the affected farmers bought drugs for themselves and that those who could not afford them risked having their animals spread the disease to others.