

## Media Brief: Outbreak of Anthrax in Embu County

Date: January 3, 2025

### SUBJECT: OUTBREAK OF ANTHRAX IN KYENI NORTH WARD, EMBU COUNTY - PUBLIC HEALTH RESPONSE

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#### Overview:

The Department of Health has confirmed **two cases of Bovine Anthrax** reported in Kyeni North Ward in Embu County. The outbreak has affected livestock with reports indicating that cumulatively two animals have succumbed. Health and Veterinary authorities have mobilized communities in order to contain the situation, provide possible treatment, and prevent further spread of the disease.

#### Key Points:

##### 1. Incident Discovery:

- o The outbreak was first identified on **28<sup>th</sup> December 2024** when reports emerged of unusual animal death in Kyeni North Ward, particularly affecting bovine.

##### 2. Current Status:

- o As of **3<sup>rd</sup> January 2025** at least **two (2) confirmed animals** with **one (1) alleged** suspected death occurring at Chuka Level 5 Hospital of human infection has been reported.
- o Department of Health has taken swift action to do a human contact tracing and as at 3<sup>rd</sup> January 2025, ten (10) persons were line listed and found not presenting any clinical manifestation of anthrax.

##### 3. Transmission and Symptoms:

- o Anthrax is a bacterial disease caused by *Bacillus anthracis*, which primarily affects animals but can also infect humans through direct contact with infected animals, their products (e.g., meat, hides), or contaminated soil.
- o Human cases are typically characterized by symptoms such as fever, fatigue, cough, and skin lesions (cutaneous anthrax). In severe cases, it can lead to respiratory or gastrointestinal issues.
- o The disease is treatable with antibiotics if caught early, but can be fatal if not treated promptly.

##### 4. Response Measures:

- o The Department of Health, in collaboration with the Department of Agriculture, Livestock, and Fisheries, has dispatched teams to the affected area to manage the outbreak. This includes:
  - Immediate monitoring of the affected livestock.
  - Distribution of vaccines/ vaccination for animals in at-risk areas – **mass animal vaccination scheduled for 28<sup>th</sup> January 2025**
  - Public health awareness campaigns to educate local residents on

preventing transmission.

- Safe disposal of infected animal carcasses to prevent environmental contamination.

- Health personnel are also conducting screenings for human cases.

**5. Precautionary Measures:**

- Local residents are advised to avoid handling sick or dead animals and to report any unusual animal deaths to Veterinary or Public Health Officers immediately.
- Avoid home slaughtering of animals or consuming meat from unknown sources which have not been inspected by a qualified veterinary Officer.
- People showing symptoms of anthrax are urged to seek medical attention promptly.

**6. Ongoing Monitoring:**

- Surveillance and monitoring are ongoing to track the extent of the outbreak and prevent further spread.

**Next Steps:**

- The Department of Health, in collaboration with Veterinary Services will continue to monitor the situation closely. Regular updates will be provided as the situation evolves.

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**EMBU COUNTY GOVERNMENT**