

*By Jeje Muhinde;*

The Burundian Ministry of Environment, Agriculture and Livestock alerted this week of the detection of Rift Valley fever for the first time in the country, with an estimated loss of at least 100 head of cattle.

According to a press release sent to the media, the Burundian ministry noted that since the outbreak of this disease this week, 100 cases of cattle mortality have been recorded.

“Since the end of April 2022, cases of an animal disease mainly affecting cattle with an unusual clinical picture have been reported in the provinces of Kirundo and Ngozi, in the north of the country”, underlined Serges Nkurunziza , Managing Director of Breeding.

Symptoms include abortion, nasal bleeding, and hyperthermia, diarrhea often mingled with blood, generalized weakness and inappetence leading to death.

Currently, this disease has already spread to other provinces of the country, such as Kayanza (north), Karusi (center), Cibitoke (west), Bujumbura (west) and Makamba in the south of the country.

“The first cases reported are generally located in cross-border areas and sites,” he said, noting that this is the first time that this disease has appeared in Burundi.

To deal with it, Serges Nkurunziza calls on the Ministry of Public Health to take collaborative steps to carry out joint surveillance of this disease.

In the meantime, field technicians are recommended to take all the necessary personal protection precautions, particularly in biosecurity measures.

“Farmers must inform the technical services of all clinical cases for their management. They are requested to regularly spray their animals,” he recommended, further stressing that in the affected areas, the restriction of all movement for ruminants and the prohibition of their slaughter must be respected until further notice.

In Burundi, this disease occurs less than a year after the start of the implementation of stable breeding at the national level.

According to experts, Rift Valley fever can cause other illnesses in humans. Contaminated cattle must therefore be incinerated.

So far, a ban has been put in place on trade in animals, the movement of livestock and the slaughter of animals only in affected areas, if there are other additional measures to be taken, the population will be informed.

Rift Valley fever is mosquito borne bunyavirus endemic to sub-Saharan Africa found in livestock and man. Humans acquire the infection mainly by mosquito bite.