

From Tuesday, 14 March 2023, unrefrigerated meat will not be allowed on the Rwandan market anymore, as it contains organisms that may transmit diseases to consumers, according to the National Agency for Quality Control, Competition and Consumer Protection (Rica).

“The consequences of eating without cooling in the refrigerator, is that there are still diseases in the tissues of the animal’s body that have not died,” Mbabazi Olivier, a Rica veterinarian, told Kigali Today news website.

Keeping food in the refrigerator does not kill microorganisms, according to experts, but slows bacterial growth and food can be kept for longer before spoiling.

Some local traders, however, said the order would cause them losses because some customers preferred freshly slaughtered meat, the website said.

In Kayonza district, where 0.9 percent of private households possess refrigerators, meat sellers claim they can’t afford refrigerators because they’re expensive and the cost of running them under electricity is high.

According to the recent 5th Rwanda population and housing census report, only 2.7 households in Rwanda have refrigerators.

At the provincial level, City of Kigali has the highest number of 12.3 percent followed by Eastern at 1.2, Northern, Southern and Western Province have 0.8 %, 1.1% and 1% respectively.

Kicukiro district at 18% has the highest number of people with freezers, followed by Gasabo at 10.6%.

Meanwhile, in the districts of Ngororero, Nybihu, Rutsiro and Karongi, it is difficult to calculate the precise contribution of unrefrigerated bacterial reproduction to rates of food-borne illness because most households don’t have refrigerators.

According to the International Institute of Refrigeration estimates that, globally, 1.6 billion tons of food are wasted every year, and that thirty per cent of this could be saved by refrigeration—a lost harvest of sufficient abundance to feed nine hundred and fifty million people annually.