

Recent outbreaks of anthrax in national parks in Uganda

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Although there is a progressive global reduction in animals cases of anthrax in many countries, sporadic cases continue to be reported and seem to be more frequent in wildlife than livestock and rarer in humans. Uganda has had two outbreaks of the disease in the Queen Elizabeth Conservation Area (QECA). The 2004 outbreaks resulted in over two hundred deaths of hippopotamus (*Hippopotamus amphibious*) in the area and about 50 buffaloes. The outbreak also resulted in about 12 human deaths suspected to have been associated with eating infected hippo meat. The following outbreak of 2010 resulted in deaths of about 80 hippos and about 20 buffaloes. Both outbreaks were associated with extreme hot weather with the possibility that the animals were picking infective spores from soil because of overgrazing. While the outbreaks were self-limiting, the outbreaks exposed the limitations and challenges of disposal of huge hippo carcasses floating on water bodies with massive environmental contamination and potential spillover into the human and livestock population. Such outbreaks continue to pose potential bioterrorist threats.

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