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Media alert from the Media Scanning & Verification Cell, IDSP-NCDC.

Alert ID	Publication Date	Reporting Date	Place Name	News Source/Publication Language
4630	10.05.2018	10.05.2018	Madurai Tamil Nadu	www.newindianexpress.com/English http://www.newindianexpress.com/states/tamil-nadu/2018/may/10/officials-on-their-toes-as-anthrax-kills-22-sheep-1812674.html
Title:	Officials on their toes as anthrax kills 22 sheep in district Madurai, Tamil Nadu			
Action By CSU, IDSP -NCDC	Information communicated to DSU-Madurai, SSU-Tamil Nadu			

With the death of 22 sheep in Karaikeni between Sunday and Wednesday, the district, for the first time, recorded the incidence of anthrax infection. According to Regional Joint Director of Animal Husbandry, R Rajasekaran anthrax infection will be declared endemic to Karaikeni village next year.

Two weeks ago, as many as 56 sheep owned by Muthaih and Ramasamy died under mysterious circumstances in Karaikeni village in T Kallupatti block in Peraiyur taluk in the district.

Sources said, the 22 sheep that died between Sunday and Wednesday belonged to Balamurugan and Shanmugham of the same village.

The officials animal husbandry department later confirmed that the 22 sheep that died after blood oozing from mouth and anus were tested positive for anthrax infection. Nine ailing sheeps have been quarantined from the flock. The symptoms of Anthrax which is caused by the spore-forming bacterium *Bacillus anthracis* will start showing between day one and two months after contracting the bacteria. The contagious infection which mainly affects animals is spread usually while grazing. Humans can also get affected if they come in contact with an infected animal or

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inhale spores. Confirming the infection, Rajasekaran said, "This records Madurai district's first incidence of anthrax infection. Five teams, stationed in and around Karikeni, Mangammalpatti, Kolliveeranpatti and Kandiyadevanpatti, have vaccinated 4,100 sheep, 1,513 goats and 643 cattle so far between Tuesday and Wednesday. The vaccination takes 7-14 days to take effect."

He went on to add that while anthrax infection in animals leads to death, it causes allergies in humans. The recent downpour in summer triggers bacterial growth in the soil. "Usually, the immune system of the livestock is weakened when it suddenly rains during summer, which could have possibly resulted in anthrax infection," he said. Rajasekaran further noted that the anthrax infection will be declared endemic to Karaikeni village next year, which would mean compulsory and widespread vaccination against anthrax infection for all livestock.

Meanwhile, the shepherds whose livelihood depend only on the sheep have demanded relief from the government for the loss. Following the anthrax outbreak, the sales of mutton have gone down, and chicken sales have shot up. Moreover, declaring the infection endemic to the region could adversely impact the sales of mutton in T Kallupatti area, the locals added.

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