

Thailand sounds alarm after anthrax outbreak in Laos

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Thailand ordered a close watch on livestock on Thursday after an outbreak of anthrax in neighboring Laos, where more than 50 suspected human cases have been reported.

Anthrax, which spreads through bacteria in soil, commonly infects grazing [livestock](#) and [wild animals](#) but can infect humans and be deadly in some cases.

Thai Prime Minister Srettha Thavisin has ordered officials to closely monitor the disease and to "protect the public".

Humans can become infected by breathing in the spores, eating contaminated food or touching bacteria with broken skin, for instance when handling diseased animals.

Media in secretive, communist Laos have reported 65 suspected cases, including 54 in southern Champasak province, which borders Thailand.

A Thai government statement referred to 54 cases reported this month.

"The PM has ordered the public health minister to closely monitor, especially near the borders," spokesman Chai Watcharong said in the statement.

It also encouraged individuals to inform authorities if they notice any abnormalities in animals.

"If your cows or buffalos die suspiciously, please inform the authorities," the statement said.

The government also encouraged those who had contacted "sick animals" to urgently see a doctor.

Thailand has had no reports of human anthrax cases since 2001.

The most it has ever reported in a single year is 102, in 1995, according to the ministry of public health.

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