



**agriculture,
forestry & fisheries**

Department:
Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

**Joint Update Statement of the Department and between the
Red Meat Industry on the Foot and Mouth Disease
Outbreak in Vhembe District delivered Honourable Minister
Senzeni Zokwana (MP)**

04 February 2019

Venue: Tshedimosetso House, GCIS, Hatfield

Time: 11: 00

Programme Director,
Deputy Minister Sfiso Buthelezi
MEC for Agriculture in Limpopo, Bioskop Makamu
Director-General Mr Mike Mlengana
Chairperson of National Animal Health Forum, Dr Pieter Vervoort
Members of the media
Ladies and gentlemen

On the 14th of January 2019, as the Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, I convened a meeting with the Red Meat Association to engage on better responses on the outbreak of the Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) in Limpopo, Vhembe District. In this meeting we agreed on a collaborative approach between government and Industry in eliminating the spillage. I must commend the contributions so far from the industry in particular at technical committees' level. The update we are giving today is a cumulative work of the collective past two weeks.

As a result of the FMD outbreak, South Africa lost its OIE recognised FMD free zone without vaccination status. This has had a devastating effect on trade of cloven hoofed animals and their products from South Africa. While some countries instituted official bans, trade was further disrupted as a result of the inability to certify for any exports where FMD free zone attestation is required.

DAFF notified trade partners and provided an update on the FMD outbreak in South Africa. A request was also made to trade partners to consider continuation of trade in safe products. Guarantees were provided for products which do not pose a risk of transmitting the disease, such as heat treated meat and dairy products, deboned and matured beef, scoured wool, salted hides and skins, livestock embryos and pork products from known FMD free pig compartments.

Following the sharing of update reports with trade partners, trade restrictions on the export of processed products have been relaxed by many trade partners. Trade in safe commodities to direct neighbouring countries have largely been accepted and, where necessary, negotiation of new health certificates is underway. There has also

been good progress with negotiations to re-open markets for deboned matured beef, processed dairy products and processed hides and skins to the other African countries, the Middle East and the Far East.

The Trade Task Team has been a very successful platform to streamline the communication between industry, Provincial Veterinary Services, DAFF and trade partners.

Up to 30 January 2019, four positive locations in Limpopo Province have been reported to the OIE. These locations were confirmed on (PCR) Polimerase Chain Reaction and serology tests, performed at the Transboundary Animal Disease programme of Onderstepoort Veterinary Research. The animals affected by the outbreak are cattle kept in rural villages with communal diptanks and grazing. The affected villages are in close proximity, within a 20 kilometre radius. The estimated number of cattle in the 20km around the affected villages is 15 000, of which 4 500 are in the FMD free zone.

A disease management area was declared, being the area enclosed by the R81, the R36, N1 and the R524 roads. The exact boundaries of this area will be published in the government gazette.

A Joint Operations Committee (JOC) was established and meets on a daily basis, consisting of Traffic, Departmental and District Disaster Management, Police, Industry (the National Animal Health Forum, Feedlot association) and Provincial and DAFF veterinary officials. The JOC has facilitated the placement of 15 road blocks at strategic points to restrict the movement of animals.

A Veterinary Operations Committee (VOC), which meets daily, was also established. The VOC has three main activities – inspections/surveillance, vaccination and movement control. Culling of affected or in-contact animals in the area is at the moment not advocated.

Vaccination of cattle commenced on 14 January 2019, starting with cattle in the affected villages, as well as cattle in the 20km radius around the affected villages.

To date, the total number of cattle vaccinated is over 10 000. Vaccinated cattle are marked to identify them as vaccinated.

With regards to the FMD Management area, no cloven hoofed animals are allowed to move within, into or out of the area – there is a complete standstill of cloven hoofed animals. Movement permits, which were previously issued for this purpose, were withdrawn. Products from cloven hoofed animals may be allowed to move within this area, but movements out of the area will be considered on merit and only allowed with permits issued by the local state veterinarian and in compliance with the conditions of such permits.

In addition, the movement of cloven-hoofed animals (including wildlife) and unprocessed products out of Mopani District and Vhembe District as well as the Molemole Municipality of Capricorn District is discouraged until further notice. As mentioned above, it is only products processed using methods validated to inactivate the FMD virus that are safe to be moved out of the area.

Drought

I have recently received and considered the Section 7 Report on Drought from the Section 7 Committee as convened through the National Agricultural Marketing Council. The report makes compelling recommendations which will provide a sustainable pathway for dealing with drought. There were four recommendations which addressed the smart drought implementation management plan, namely:

- (i) Setting up a disaster fund;
- (ii) Establishing Public-Private Partnerships;
- (iii) Setting up a multiperil agricultural insurance; and
- (iv) Creating an Early Warning System in disaster risk reduction.

Some of these recommendations require engagements with Ministers of Finance and Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs. To this effect I will be working with these Ministers to ensure that our teams and the industry conclude on the

practical implementation steps which will give effect to the recommendations. The DG will lead to ensure that the smart drought implementation plan is implemented.

In response to this persistent drought situation, a provisional allocation was set aside by the Minister of Finance in 2018, for several purposes, including drought relief and augment public infrastructure investment. Following this announcement, the agricultural sector applied for drought funding and received a total allocation of R566, 5 million from National Treasury which is currently being implemented in various provinces, mostly targeting those farmers unable to cope using their own means as per Disaster Management Act (Act No 16 of 2015).

In closing, we are appealing to farmers and all other stakeholders on FMD to use specially made e-mail for enquiries: medialiaison@daff.gov.za

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