



agriculture, forestry & fisheries

Department:
Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

MEDIA STATEMENT

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PROGRESS MADE ON THE CONTROL OF FOOT AND MOUTH DISEASE IS COMMENDABLE

An outbreak of Foot-and-Mouth Disease (FMD) was detected on 02 January 2019 in the high surveillance area of the foot and mouth disease free zone in Limpopo. This was confirmed and reported to the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) on 07 January 2019. As a result, South Africa lost its OIE recognised FMD free zone without vaccination status.

The speedy action taken by the joint operations committee — traffic department, District Disaster Management Unit, police service, industry, national veterinary officials and provincial veterinary officials yielded desired results. During the foot and mouth disease task teams' meetings of 25 February 2019, it was reported that the 16 strategically placed roadblocks are functioning effectively and no cloven-hoofed animals are allowed to move out of the disease management area.

Furthermore, the veterinary operations committee in the quarantined area has reported no clinical signs of foot and mouth disease or serologically positive test results in the epidemiological groups surveyed over the recent three weeks. Vaccination of cattle in the disease management area commenced on 14 January 2019 and to date an estimated 10 000 animals have been vaccinated and marked to identify them as vaccinated.

Eighteen independent parties previously participated in a call for expression of interest to implement a national individual animal identification and traceability system for South Africa. These parties were briefed on 18 February 2019 in terms of the scope of the foot and mouth disease spillage into the free zone. They were given an opportunity to design a solution that responds to this specific identification challenge that could be extended into a national programme in future and the task team eagerly awaits their proposed solutions.

More than 400 local livestock owners across 16 rural villages in the disease management area were interviewed from 19 to 22 February 2019, in an attempt to fast track the impact of the actions taken at grassroots level to contain the disease. Local livestock owners responded well and currently the questionnaire results are being compacted into a business case that will assist the technical task team to respond appropriately with viable and sustainable solution to regain the FMD free

zone status for the country. The next phase of this awareness campaign starts the coming week.

The promotion of continued trade in safe commodities to our trade partners is highly prioritised, as such; robust negotiations are ongoing, pursued by a dedicated joint trade task team. DAFF successfully negotiated the revision of veterinary health certificates for beef to Bahrain, Jordan, Qatar, Kuwait, UAE, Egypt and Swaziland while negotiations with Mozambique, Lesotho and Namibia are ongoing. Namibia agreed to accept venison produced before 05 December 2018.

Though China had suspended import of all cloven hoofed animals and their products from South Africa, it indicated that it is in the process of conducting a comprehensive risk assessment on the FMD situation in South Africa. DAFF is intending to send a high level delegation to China to address the matter with the Chinese Department of Animal and Plant Quarantine in March.

Minister Senzeni Zokwana is grateful for the support afforded by the technical teams from DAFF and Limpopo Department of Agriculture and Rural Development in the control of this outbreak

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