



agriculture, forestry & fisheries

Department:
Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



JOINT STATEMENT OF THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, FORESTRY AND FISHERIES AND THE LIVESTOCK INDUSTRY

14 March 2019

On 07 January this year the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries confirmed and reported an outbreak of foot and mouth disease in the high surveillance area of the foot and mouth disease free zone in Limpopo, adjacent to the protection zone. Subsequently, South Africa lost its World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) recognised foot and mouth disease free zone without vaccination status.

Status of the outbreak

Since the last positive location was reported on 04 February 2019, five weeks ago, there had been no new clinical cases of foot and mouth disease or serologically positive test results in the epidemiological groups surveyed. Roughly 13 500 cattle distributed across 27 diptanks have been vaccinated and identified as vaccinated in the former foot and mouth disease free area since 14 January 2019.

Foot and mouth disease free zone status

Valuable information was solicited from more than 400 local livestock owners across 16 rural villages interviewed during February and the department is assessing the obtained information to strategise way forward to regain the foot and mouth disease free zone status for the country. The next steps have to be considered, carefully taking into account timelines and available resources. The department appreciates the technical advice from world-renowned experts and the practical guidance from the private sector that informs their plan-of-action.

Opening countries for export

The continuation of trade in safe commodities has been prioritised. The department successfully negotiated the revision of veterinary health certificates for beef to Bahrain, Egypt, Jordan, Kuwait, Lesotho, Mozambique, Qatar, Swaziland and the United Arab Emirates. Trade in pork from foot and mouth disease free pig compartments has been re-opened to Lesotho, Mozambique, Namibia (partially), Seychelles and Swaziland. Negotiations with Namibia (for beef) and Botswana (for pork) are still underway. The markets for dairy products have largely been restored. Some markets for the export of hides, skins and wool are still affected and robust negotiations are underway, particularly for products that have been processed to ensure the destruction of the foot and mouth virus.

About China

Minister Senzeni Zokwana met with the Chinese Ambassador to discuss the continuation of trade and acceptance of South Africa's safe commodities. Stricter proceedings to ensure necessary assurance for future trading have been affirmed.

Safe commodities

The department considers commodities that have been processed to inactivate the foot and mouth disease virus according to the internationally accepted requirements of the OIE Terrestrial Animal Health Code as safe. The full list is available on request. However, each importing country still retains the right to determine its appropriate level of protection and it must not be assumed that export markets for safe commodities are automatically open.

As true South Africans, encouraged by President Ramaphosa's campaign of "*Thuma mina*", the veterinary teams from both state and private entities, organised industry and law enforcement officers heeded the call and rolled up their sleeves to ensure the smooth running and a successful outcome of the disease control campaign. For this; the department extends its heartfelt appreciation and gratitude.

As the African saying goes: "If you want to go fast, go alone; if you want to go far, go together".

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