

# Foot and Mouth Disease: Vhembe Outbreak and Surveillance Update

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agriculture,  
forestry & fisheries

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Department:  
Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries  
**REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

Report compiled by:  
Directorate: Animal Health

## 1. Introduction and summary

On 7 January 2019, an outbreak of Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) was confirmed in cattle in the Vhembe district of Limpopo Province. The outbreak occurred in the high surveillance area of the FMD Free Zone, immediately adjacent to the protection zone. The outbreak was reported to the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) and, as a result, South Africa lost its FMD free zone without vaccination status.

DAFF is assessing all available information to develop the most appropriate strategy to regain the FMD free zone status for the country. The next steps have to be considered, carefully taking into account timelines and available resources.

**Map 1: Location of the FMD outbreak in the FMD free zone of South Africa**



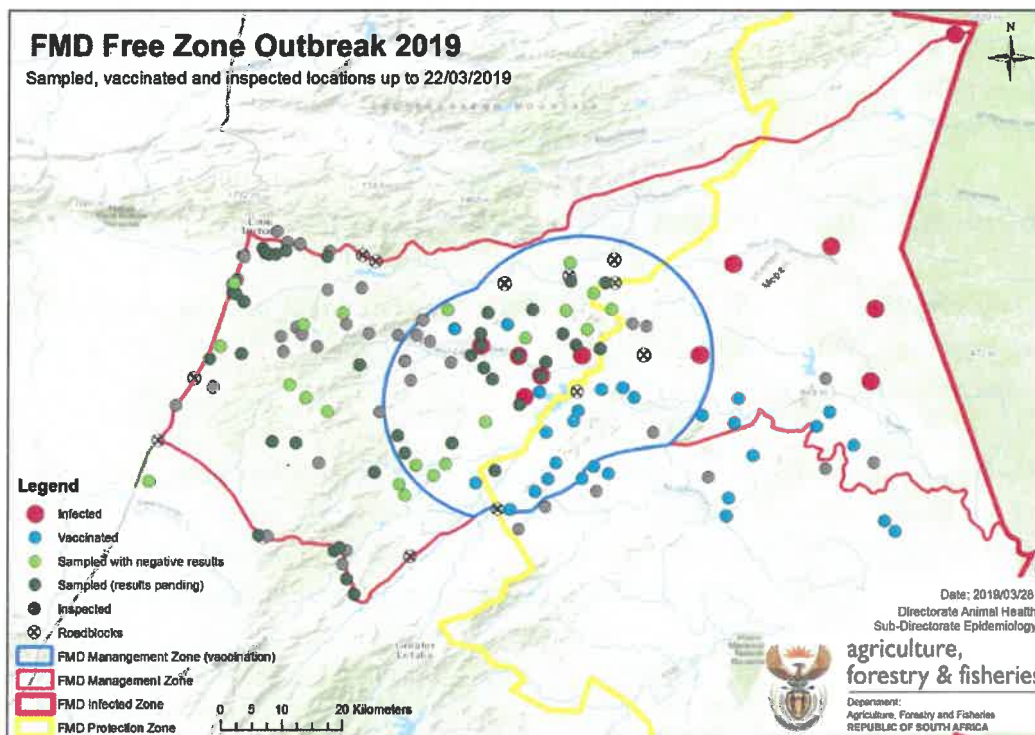
## 2. Outbreaks reported

It is more than 7 weeks since the last positive location was reported to the OIE on 4 February 2019. In total, 5 positive locations have been confirmed by the Transboundary Animal Disease programme of Onderstepoort Veterinary Research and reported to the OIE. These locations are all in close proximity within the Disease Management area that was declared in Limpopo Province. The affected animals are cattle kept in rural villages with communal diptanks and grazing.

### 3. Control measures implemented

A Disease Management area was declared and the details published in the Government gazette. Clinical inspections, vaccination and movement control are implemented within this area, as well as roadblocks to prevent movement of live animals and products out of the area. The Joint Operations Committee (JOC) and Veterinary Operations Committee (VOC) meet on a daily basis to ensure that all the measures that have been put in place inside this area are maintained. The locations for the various disease control activities are indicated in the map hereunder.

**Map 2: Disease Control activities in the FMD outbreak Management Area**



#### 3.1 Inspections / surveillance in Disease Management Area:

Clinical inspections have been performed at approximately 144 locations within the Disease Management area (including the part in the Protection Zone and the part in the former FMD free area). These locations are visited on a regular basis, and more than 650 inspection visits in total have been made to these locations. If any suspicious clinical signs are found during these visits, samples are collected and sent to the laboratory for FMD testing.

Samples have also been collected at several locations that have been inspected and where no clinical signs were found. These samples will be tested to confirm that there has been no undetected spread of the infection.

A survey of all locations that were vaccinated will start soon, to evaluate and confirm whether the vaccination campaign effectively prevented further spread of the disease from infected locations.

### 3.2 Vaccination:

Cattle in approximately 62 diptanks / villages in the Disease Management area have been vaccinated, which includes diptanks in the former FMD free zone as well as in the FMD protection zone. In the former FMD free area, roughly 13 500 cattle distributed across 28 diptanks have been vaccinated and identified as such. The first round of vaccination of cattle started on 14 January 2019 and the second round, which started on 25 February 2019, will most likely be concluded by the end of March 2019.

### 3.3 Movement control:

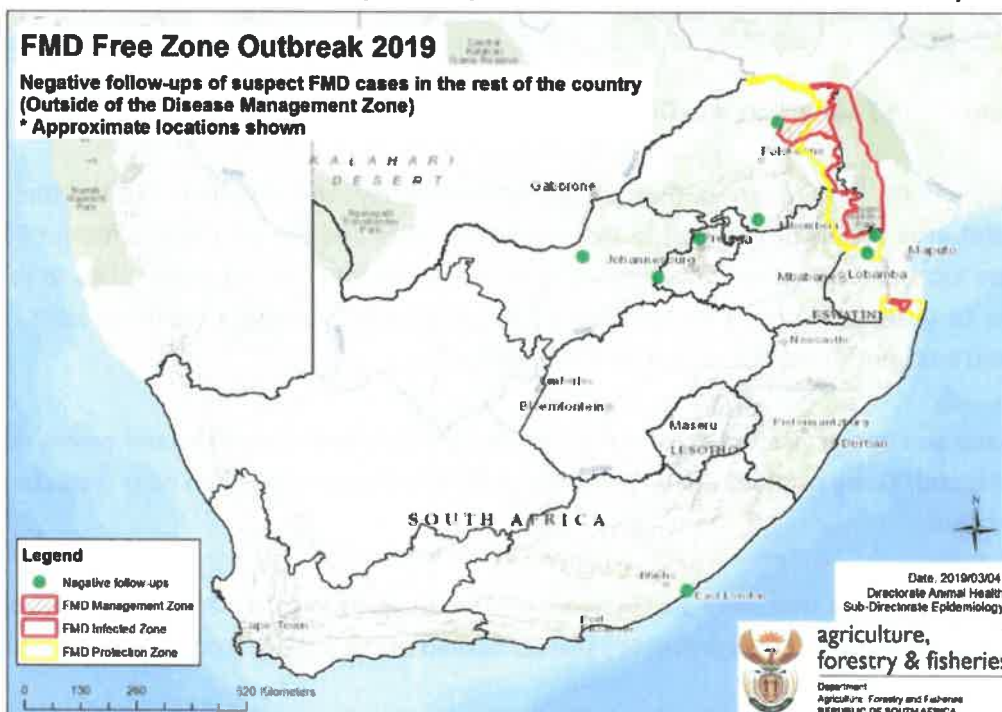
Movement control is applied, with particular emphasis on preventing live cloven hoofed animals and their unprocessed products from moving out of the area. There is no sign that the disease has spread beyond the declared Disease Management area. It is likely that the roadblocks will be discontinued by the end of April. However, the restriction on movements out of the area will remain in place and the roadblocks will be replaced by more intensified roaming patrols.

## 4. Epidemiological investigation and surveillance

The virus was identified as SAT2 and the origin of the original outbreak in 2018 was most likely due to contact between stray buffalo, escaping from the FMD infected zone and coming into contact with adjacent communal cattle.

Passive surveillance in the rest of the country (outside of the Disease Management area) has been continuing as always and any suspicion of FMD is investigated. The map below shows the approximate locations of the follow-up investigations that have been reported so far. They have all been found to be negative for FMD (either based on clinical inspection or based on testing for FMD).

**Map 3: Negative follow-ups of suspect FMD cases in the rest of the country**



## 5. Trade implications

As a result of this outbreak, South Africa lost its OIE recognised FMD free zone without vaccination status and exports where FMD free zone attestation is required cannot be certified. The continuation of trade in safe commodities is prioritized and negotiations are ongoing with various trade partners. High level meetings were held with counterparts from the People's Republic of China to discuss the continuation of trade in safe commodities from South Africa to China.

DAFF successfully negotiated the revision of veterinary health certificates for beef to Bahrain, Egypt, Jordan, Kuwait, Lesotho, Mozambique, Qatar, Swaziland and the UAE. Negotiations for reopening of markets for beef are ongoing with Namibia and Seychelles. Namibia agreed to accept venison produced before 05 December 2018. Trade in pork from FMD free pig compartments has been reopened to Lesotho, Mozambique, Namibia (partially), Seychelles and Swaziland and negotiations with Botswana are continuing. The markets for dairy products to various trade partners have largely been restored. Some markets for the export of hides, skins and wool are also affected and negotiations are continuing with these trade partners, including Egypt and Malaysia, particularly where the products have been processed to ensure destruction of the FMD virus.

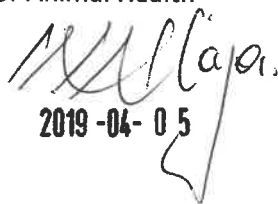
## 6. Awareness and extension

More than 400 local livestock owners across 16 rural villages in the disease management area were interviewed from 19 to 22 February 2019, in order to determine the impact of the disease control measures on the ground. The outcome of this effort will assist the technical task team to decide on a viable and sustainable solution to regain the FMD free zone status for the country.

Further education and awareness events on FMD were held at 6 villages in the disease management area. 15 000 Foot and Mouth disease pamphlets were translated in Venda and Xitsonga for distribution by the state vet office to the local communities.

Director Animal Health

Date:



2019-04-05

