



MINISTRY
AGRICULTURE, LAND REFORM AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



Media Statement

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JOINT STATEMENT OF THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, LAND REFORM AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT AND THE NATIONAL ANIMAL HEALTH FORUM ON FOOT AND MOUTH DISEASE UPDATE:

The Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development advises farmers and livestock owners that all parties transacting with cloven-hoofed animals should observe the utmost caution. All gatherings of animals from more than one source (incl. auctions, livestock shows, and speculative transactions) are discouraged until the exact situation is known.

Trace back and trace forward thus far linked infected animals to an auction facility in Limpopo Province and it has been confirmed that at least five commercial facilities have been affected as a result. More properties that purchased animals at the same auction could be affected. All known infected properties have been placed under quarantine, suspect properties under precautionary quarantine; plans to resolve the situation are being implemented.

Movement of cloven hooved livestock

- 1.If at all possible, live cloven hooved animals should not be moved until the current situation has been stabilised. Only transport animals that are healthy and destined for immediate slaughter.
- 2.All buyers of animals should ensure that the animals purchased are free of disease, especially free of FMD. Any transaction of cloven-hoofed animals should be accompanied with a veterinary health certificate issued by a veterinarian
- 3.It should be noted that FMD virus can remain viable in the environment for a few days. Thus, any transport vehicle should be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected away from any animals before animals are loaded. Vehicles used to transport animals to abattoirs should thus be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected before leaving the abattoir premises.

Please note that in terms of Section 11 of the Animal Diseases Act, 1984 it is the responsibility of “any owner or manager of land on which there are animals ...take,... all reasonable steps to prevent the infection of the animals with any animal disease, or parasite and the spreading thereof from the relevant land or animals...”. Anyone spreading FMD through the movement of animals may thus be held civilly and or criminally liable for such offence.

Biosecurity

Any person having had contact with possibly infected animals should take all precautions necessary to change clothing and footwear before handling other cloven-hoofed animals.

Anybody that is unsure of the above advice should please contact their local state or private veterinarian for biosecurity guidance and/or assistance to develop a biosecurity protocol for their farm.

Adherence to the above advice will assist DALRRD, Veterinary Services Limpopo, and farmers to resolve the situation. It is vital that all stakeholders act reasonably and responsibly and according to the law at all time. All animal owners are encouraged to stay well informed.

Visit: www.nahf.co.za for the FMD-Basic Biosecurity Guidelines. The disease does not affect human beings and it is safe to consume products of cloven-hoofed animals, such as meat and milk.

Alternative options

Electronic auctions or one-on-one transactions of cloven-hoofed animals (including wildlife) could be considered between producers if all biosecurity protocols, quarantine measures, veterinary health certificates, individual animal identification, as well as traceability back to source are implemented before any transaction takes place.

Background

On 1 November 2019, veterinary services were alerted to clinical signs suspicious for Foot-and-Mouth disease (FMD) in a herd of cattle on a farm in the Molemole local municipality of the Capricorn district, Limpopo. Trace back and trace forward of animals from the positively confirmed herd is underway to determine the extent of the outbreak. So far, at least 5 properties have been confirmed.

A Technical Task Team has been established by the Honourable Minister, consisting of DAFF Veterinary officials, Provincial Veterinary officials as well as industry commodity groups led by the National Animal Health Forum and experts in the specific disease.

FMD is a highly contagious viral disease that affects cattle, pigs (domestic and wild), sheep, goats, and other cloven-hoofed animals. Signs of disease in animals may include depressed animals, sores in the mouth of animals causing reluctance to eat, and lameness. FMD may show no clinical signs for up to 14–21 days when animals are infected. For this reason, it is very difficult to ascertain if the animals are infected by visual inspection alone.

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