



MINISTER
AGRICULTURE
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

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MEDIA STATEMENT

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MINISTER STEENHUISEN CALLS ON PROVINCES TO SPEED UP VACCINATIONS AS MILLIONS MORE FOOT AND MOUTH DISEASE VACCINES ARRIVE

The Minister of Agriculture, John Steenhuisen, has announced that the first batch of a 3.5 million dose consignment of Biogénesis Bagó Foot and mouth disease (FMD) vaccines arrived on Sunday, and has called on all provincial departments to ensure their top priority for the next few weeks must be to vaccinate as many animals as quickly as possible.

The remainder of this record-breaking shipment from Argentina is already en route and expected to arrive during the course of the week.

“This is the largest single consignment of FMD vaccines ever imported into South Africa. Provinces must now move with speed and urgency to scale up frontline vaccination efforts and protect our national herd of approximately 14 million cattle,” said Minister Steenhuisen.

With the arrival of the 3.5 million doses, South Africa will have successfully secured and imported a total of 13.5 million vaccine doses before the end of May 2026. This forms part of the Department of Agriculture’s wider strategy to achieve and maintain “FMD free with vaccination” status, while safeguarding rural livelihoods, food security and agricultural exports.

To maintain the pace and effectiveness of the campaign, the department is already fully prepared to facilitate the importation of follow-up consignments required for the critical booster vaccination programme. This will ensure that second-round vaccinations can be administered within the required timelines to establish durable immunity across the national herd.

“The acquisition of 13.5 million doses in just four months demonstrates the seriousness with which we are confronting this disease,” Minister Steenhuisen said.

“If we maintain this disciplined and aggressive trajectory, and ensure these vaccines are administered rapidly and effectively, we can ensure that South Africa never again experiences outbreaks on this scale. But government cannot do this alone. Every



livestock owner has a responsibility to protect their animals through strict biosecurity measures, compliance with movement controls, and full participation in vaccination and identification programmes.”

The Minister emphasised that defeating FMD requires a unified national effort across government, industry and farming communities.

“This is a moment that demands partnership and collective action. Commercial farmers, communal farmers, veterinarians, industry bodies and government all have a role to play if we are to defeat this disease and secure the future of our livestock sector.

“The stakes could not be higher. This is about protecting jobs, defending rural economies, safeguarding food security, and protecting the national interest,” Minister Steenhuisen said.

To support the accelerated vaccination campaign, more Animal Health Technicians will be appointed and deployed across affected provinces to strengthen frontline operations and expand vaccination capacity.

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