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Media release

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MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE AND KZN MEC MEET WITH HIS MAJESTY KING MISUZULU kaZWELITHINI TO ADDRESS FMD CHALLENGES IN KZN

The Minister of Agriculture, Mr. John Steenhuisen, accompanied by the KwaZulu-Natal MEC for Agriculture, Mrs T.P. Madlopha-Mthethwa and industry role-players today met with His Majesty King Misuzulu kaZwelithini today at the eMashobeni Royal Palace in Nongoma to discuss the ongoing challenges posed by Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) in the province.

The engagement formed part of the Department's intensified efforts to curb the spread of the disease and protect the province's livestock sector. The main objective of the meeting was to seek His Majesty's support in controlling the spread of FMD, which has remained a challenge in the region. KwaZulu-Natal continues to be one of the most affected provinces, with over 130 active outbreaks in communal dip tanks, small-scale farms, and five game reserves. Two additional suspected outbreaks are currently under investigation.

The discussions focused on collaborative solutions, including enhanced disease management strategies, improved biosecurity measures, and support for affected farmers. His Majesty King Misuzulu kaZwelithini expressed his full support for the Department's efforts and committed to leading by example. He has invited the Department to his farm to commence vaccination efforts, demonstrating his dedication to disease control and livestock health in the region.

Additionally, the Department of Agriculture confirmed that funding for vaccinations in the affected areas has been made available, ensuring that vaccination efforts can be ramped up to contain the disease.

Following the meeting, Minister Steenhuisen commended King Misuzulu kaZwelithini's

leadership and commitment to working with government structures to support farmers and strengthen disease control measures.

The Department of Agriculture remains committed to working closely with traditional leaders, farmers, veterinary officials and industry role-players to mitigate the impact of FMD and restore stability in the livestock industry.

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