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Media release

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CONTAINMENT OF FOOT-AND-MOUTH DISEASE GAINS MOMENTUM

The Minister of Agriculture, John Steenhuisen, is pleased to announce that intensified efforts by the Department of Agriculture to control and eradicate foot-and-mouth disease (FMD) are paying off with disease management areas (DMA) of two provinces soon to be lifted and an urgent order placed for much-needed vaccines to the value of R72 million.

Recognising the seriousness of the FMD threat, Minister Steenhuisen escalated control efforts to the Deputy Director-General (DGG): Agricultural Production, Biosecurity and Natural Resources Management earlier this month. The office of the DDG has already engaged with veterinary services and various industry representatives to detail the actions required to curb the threat.
The biosecurity, traceability and record keeping of animals bought and sold at auctions and similar industries were raised as a specific concern and this will be addressed by the department in a directive due to be published.
Funds for the procurement of the vaccine have been transferred to Onderstepoort Biological Products (OBP). The procurement process has started, and the next batch of vaccines is estimated to be delivered by mid-June. This marks a crucial step forward in the department's vaccination strategy. The department has provisionally costed the vaccine requirements for the 2025/2026 financial year at R1,2 billion, with each vaccine estimated at R100 per dose.

Positive developments in disease management areas

The lifting of the current DMA in both the Eastern Cape and Limpopo is imminent. Since 26 July 2024, a DMA has been in place in the Kouga and Kou-Kamma municipalities in the Eastern Cape to control FMD outbreaks.
Through a robust vaccination campaign, 144 424 vaccinations were successfully administered.

With the last cases reported in September 2024 and extensive serological surveillance confirming no undetected pockets of the disease, Minister Steenhuisen is now able to confirm that the movement restrictions in the Eastern Cape DMA will be lifted soon. Similarly, all restrictions on the DMA in Limpopo will be lifted.This DMA has been in place since September 2022 to control an FMD outbreak in dip tanks in the Vhembe Municipality.

Two rounds of vaccination saw 23 024 vaccinations administered on cattle at 34 dip tanks, proving highly effective in bringing the outbreak under control. “These positive developments highlight the effectiveness of our collaborative control measures, and the dedication of all stakeholders involved. The department remains vigilant and committed to implementing proactive strategies to safeguard animal health and the agricultural sector,” Minister Steenhuisen emphasised.

Status of the outbreaks in KwaZulu-Natal

Since there are still signs of active virus circulation in the area, the DMA in KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) remains in place.

Some outbreaks that were detected outside of the DMA were successfully contained with no sign of outward spread of the disease. An abattoir in the Vryheid area in the DMA is in the process of being designated to slaughter animals from premises under FMD restrictions.

A system has been put in place to assess the level of biosecurity on individual farms, with the intention of aligning the control measures to the biosecurity risks.

Stable status of the outbreak in Mpumalanga

In April 2025 FMD was reported on one farm in the Gert Sibande Municipality, which was identified as a trace forward from an auction in KZN.

Following one round of targeted surveillance of surrounding farms, there are no signs that this outbreak spread to any adjacent farms or other linked locations.The department has started with the second round of surveillance.

New cases detected in Gauteng

A feedlot and adjacent farm were found positive in the West Rand Municipality of Gauteng.

Initial information implicated an auction in Heidelberg, however follow-up epidemiological investigation indicated that there was most likely another source of infection. Veterinary services are testing adjacent premises and linked locations to determine the origin of this outbreak and possible spread.

In the second half of May 2025, clinical signs of FMD were reported in communal cattle in the

East Rand of Gauteng. Samples were collected and FMD infection was confirmed.
Epidemiological investigations have commenced to identify and test all adjacent and linked locations.

Trade suspension imposed by the People's Republic of China

Unfortunately, the People's Republic of China has suspended imports of cloven-hoofed animals and related products owing to the spread of the outbreaks in KZN to Mpumalanga and Gauteng.
Preliminary information obtained confirmed that this suspension includes only beef from South Africa to China.
The good news is that the export of wool that complies with the protocol already agreed to, has not been affected.

Caution to buyers and sellers of livestock

Livestock owners in the country should take note of the incubation period of FMD. This is a period of two to 14 days, within which animals can appear clinically healthy, before they start showing clinical signs generally associated with FMD. It is crucial that newly bought animals are kept separate from the resident herd for at least 28 days, even if a health attestation was issued for the animals. The health attestation and 28-day separation have been a legal requirement since October 2022.

Biosecurity and awareness in the entire country

Minister Steenhuisen emphasised that biosecurity is everybody's responsibility. The department urges all livestock farmers in the country to limit animal movement as far as possible. Auctioneers and livestock owners should be vigilant when buying cloven-hoofed animals from provinces in which there are active FMD outbreaks. No cloven-hoofed animals should be accepted from areas under restriction for FMD.

Section 11 of the Animal Diseases Act, 1984 (Act No. 35 of 1984) imposes a legal duty on any owner or manager of animals to take all reasonable steps to prevent their animals from becoming infected with any disease and to prevent the spread of any disease from their animals or land to other animals or other properties.

Essential biosecurity measures include limiting and/or postponing the introduction of new animals and, if absolutely necessary, only introducing animals from known clean farms with a health declaration, preventing nose-to-nose contact of farm animals with animals outside the farm, maintaining secure farm boundaries, and restricting access for people and vehicles as

much as possible.

FMD is a controlled animal disease in terms of the Animal Diseases Act, 1984 (Act No 35 of 1984). Any suspicious clinical symptoms (salivation, blisters in the mouth, limping or hoof lesions) must be reported to the local State Veterinarian immediately and such animals must not be moved under any circumstances. The Act prescribes certain control measures, like isolation and movement control, that are being enforced by veterinary services.

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