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Media statement **22 September 2026**

MINISTER AUCAMP ANNOUNCES PRIVATE SECTOR TO ASSIST IN LOCAL FMD VACCINE PRODUCTION

A proposal by the Minister of Agriculture, Willie Aucamp, to allow qualifying private companies to make use of the ARC's intellectual property (IP) regarding Foot and mouth disease (FMD) vaccines and for them to join in manufacturing the ARC's FMD vaccine at a large scale, have been unanimously agreed to by the Agricultural Research Council (ARC) and its Board on Monday 21 September 2026.

The ARC vaccine is a very effective defence against the domestic FMD strains and requires only a single annual administration. However, due to manufacturing constraints, the ARC is currently not able to manufacture their FMD vaccine at scale. Allowing local and/or international companies to manufacture the ARC vaccine, under conditional IP licensing agreements with the ARC, will therefore help the ARC to overcome the current manufacturing constraints that they are experiencing.

Following the board meeting, Minister Aucamp said: "Partnering with the private sector to manufacture the ARC vaccine marks a decisive breakthrough in safeguarding South Africa's livestock sector, strengthening national biosecurity, and securing food supply chains."

"I've listened to the concerns of farmers and other stakeholders in the sector, and I appreciate that they want swift action to deal with this Foot and Mouth Disease outbreak. It is against this

background that we are now, for the first time, going to allow the private sector to make use of the IP of the ARC to enhance the availability of the ARC vaccine."

The ARC remains steadfastly committed to rebuilding its own internal production capacity, and while third party assistance will be brought in to produce the ARC vaccine at large scale, the ARC will continue to expand its own FMD manufacturing capacity. Any income that the ARC will derive from these licencing agreements will be ringfenced by the ARC and will only be used by the ARC to increase its own FMD vaccine manufacturing capacity.

"Although the implementation of this decision will not happen overnight, it is a huge step forward in combating this FMD outbreak, and I am proud to confirm that all parties involved have committed to do whatever they can to ensure that this decision is implemented without delay." said Minister Aucamp.

Further to this development, and on the request of Minister Aucamp, the ARC will also submit representative FMD field-circulating virus isolates from South Africa to the Pirbright Institute in the United Kingdom in October for a second round of vaccine-matching assessments. The purpose of this exercise is to provide an additional scientific assessment of the suitability of available local and imported vaccines against FMD viruses currently circulating in South Africa.

The Department of Agriculture will continue to work with commodity organisations, provincial veterinary services, the ARC, organised agriculture, and other stakeholders to strengthen the country's FMD control programme.

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