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## Media release

Immediate release

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### UPDATE ON OUTBREAK OF FOOT AND MOUTH DISEASE IN EASTERN CAPE PROVINCE

The Minister of Agriculture, Mr John Steenhuisen (MP) has, in his budget vote, emphasised that biosecurity remains a priority for the department. He also reflected on the risk that Foot and mouth disease poses for our local production and trade, both national and international.

The department is working with all stakeholders to ensure that biosecurity measures are implemented to manage the current FMD outbreak in Eastern Cape. The department is also in constant engagements with the Eastern Cape Department of Agriculture, Rural Development and Agrarian Reform, to ensure that FMD control measures are implemented, and that the disease does not spread within the province.

Noting the shared responsibilities for biosecurity implementation, the department is also in constant engagements with the Western Cape Department of Agriculture to ensure that the disease does not spread to the Western Cape province. The investigation into the origin and extent of the FMD outbreak in Eastern Cape continues. Twenty-three (23) farms in the Humansdorp area and one (1) farm in the East London area have been confirmed as positive for FMD.

Locations confirmed to be positive for FMD were placed under quarantine by the Eastern Cape Provincial Veterinary Services. Full epidemiological investigations are continuing. Immediate neighbours and all linked locations have been placed under precautionary quarantine, pending clinical and serological investigation to determine their FMD status.

A total number of 46 applications to vaccinate non-infected farms were received. Of these applications, 30 farms were permitted to vaccinate. Vaccination will assist to further reduce the spread of the disease.



Seventeen (17) applications for voluntary vaccination have been received, but not yet approved. Applications are considered for vaccination if the farms are within the 10-km radius of a positive farm. The applications are prioritised to ensure that the farms at highest risk are vaccinated first. It was agreed during the Joint Operations Committee on FMD that the available personnel resources will be used in a manner that allows for the maximum number of farms to be vaccinated in the shortest time possible.

Farmers are again urged to observe biosecurity on their farms and to protect their own herds from becoming infected. 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.

In line with this, a regulation was prescribed in October 2022 by the Minister of Agriculture, stipulating that cloven hoofed livestock may only be moved if accompanied by a health declaration from the owner of the animals, attesting to their health at the time of moving. In addition, all cattle, sheep, and goats newly brought onto a farm must be kept separated from the resident herds for at least 28 days.

FMD is a controlled animal disease in terms of the Animal Diseases Act, 1984 (Act No 35 of 1984) and the Act prescribes certain control measures, like isolation and movement control, that are being enforced by Veterinary Services.

Should any suspicious clinical symptoms (salivation, blisters in the mouth, limping or hoof lesions) be seen, it should be reported to the local State Veterinarian immediately and such animals must not be moved under any circumstances.

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