



Agriculture & Rural Development

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Agriculture and Rural Development
North West Provincial Government
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



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MEDIA STATEMENT

Att : ALL EDITORS

Media Houses

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Foot and mouth disease control measures in the North West Province

Limpopo province diagnosed a Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) outbreak in Molemole Local Municipality on the 01st of November 2019. This outbreak occurred in the free FMD zone of the country. The outbreak was recognized and confirmed in eight (8) sites which include feedlots, abattoirs, and speculators and on farms.

FMD is a highly contagious viral disease that affects all cloven hoofed animals of domestic and wild origin. It presents with sores in the mouth and in between the digits causing them to be depressed, reluctant to eat and be lame. The disease does not affect humans and meat from such animals is safe to eat when it has been treated in prescribed manner.

The previous outbreak that happened in Vhembe in Limpopo in January costed the export status of the country and resulted in a series of negotiations with South Africa's trading partners to re-establish trade with the country.

A team from the industry and the National Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development met and crafted a national strategy for control of the disease. It was realized that congregation of animals contributes greatly to the risk of spreading the disease. For that reason the National Director of Animal Health issued a media statement after consultation with the livestock

industry on the 14th November suspending all live auctions in the Northern provinces which includes Limpopo, Mpumalanga, Gauteng and North West with immediate effect. Minister Thoko Didiza of Agriculture, Rural Development and Land Reform is expected to gazette the suspension in due course. The message was however communicated to all stakeholders of the industry even ahead of the gazette exercise.

The Directorate Veterinary Services has the mandate to conduct risk assessment on biological risk of diseases and take appropriate action under the Animal Diseases Act as guided by OIE prescripts. The rationale behind singling out of auctions came after assessment of the risks associated with it where animals congregate from different farms which increases the potential of transmitting the virus to a wider area where they are destined to go.

The Veterinary Services Directorate of the North West Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD) similarly made communication to the industry affected seeking to enforce the suspension of live auctions of cloven hoofed animals. There is unfortunately resistance to complying with this decision by the recipient industry. To be able to implement the decision, assistance from the law enforcement agencies was sought. The Department is currently in the process of taking legal action in order to arrive at implementing the protocol. The Directorate Veterinary Services is acting under the guidance of the Animal Diseases Act 35 of 1984 in assessing the risk of introducing the disease in the North West by enforcing the suspension of auctions of live cloven hoofed animals.

Farmers are advised to be on the lookout for signs that resemble the disease and report them immediately to the nearest State Veterinary office.

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