

# letsoma

An official External Publication of the  
Department of Agriculture and  
Rural Development



OCTOBER - DECEMBER  
2024 Edition

## Empowering The Future

Young Farmer receives Pregnant  
Bonsmara as a start up



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Transformation  
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**agriculture &  
rural development**

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



# POULTRY FARM BIOSECURITY PROTECTING YOUR FLOCK!

## VISITOR & VEHICLE LOG

- Maintain a record of all visitors, maintenance vehicles, feed delivery trucks, and litter delivery vehicles.
- Clean and disinfect all vehicles entering the farm.

## CONTROL FARM ACCESS

- Restrict access to unauthorized vehicles.
- Ensure visitors follow strict biosecurity protocols.

## SHOE & FOOTWEAR PROTOCOL

- Use disposable shoe covers between vehicles and farm entry points, or provide disinfectant spray for shoes.
- Establish footbaths and require boot changes at every entry and exit point.

## FACILITY HYGIENE

- Regularly clean and disinfect floors, equipment, and tools.
- Ensure proper waste management to minimize contamination risks.

## WATER QUALITY

- Provide clean and good-quality water to maintain flock health.

## ANIMAL SEPARATION

- Keep other livestock away from the poultry facility to prevent disease transmission.

**Your proactive measures are the first defence against poultry diseases!**



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# Editorial Comment

Editorial: Emelda Setthako

As we close off the year 2024, it's with a deep sense of pride and optimism that we bring you the latest edition of Letsema. This Issue is brimming with practical advice, expert insights, and inspiring stories that reflect the strength and resilience of our farming community.

Although we've faced challenges like delayed rainfall, the potential for a bountiful harvest still lies within our reach. The year's unpredictable weather has taught us the importance of adaptability, and as we move into the final planting season, there is still time to make strategic decisions. Take advantage of the replenished soil moisture to sow the right crops, every planting window is an opportunity to secure a successful harvest.

In this edition, we cover critical topics designed to support both emerging and established farmers in the North West Province. These include essential regulations on animal movement, which affect both local and international trade, as well as the ongoing initiatives to enhance soil fertility management through targeted training. We also highlight the inspiring work of young farmers who are making their mark in the industry, supported by the Department's efforts to foster the next generation of agricultural leaders.

Notably, we're excited to share news of the revived Women in Agriculture and Rural Development structure, led by MEC Madoda Sambatha, which seeks to empower women in rural communities and uplift the agricultural sector as a whole. Equally important is our focus on the provincial response to the brucellosis threat, ensuring that our farmers are equipped with the knowledge to prevent and manage this disease.

This Issue also features expert Interviews that offer valuable advice on how to navigate the complexities of farming in today's world, from soil health to market access. As always, we are committed to providing you with the tools you need to thrive in this ever-evolving sector.

As we work together to position the North West Province as the country's food basket, it's clear that the strength of our farmers lies not only in their hard work, but also in the support of their communities and the institutions that champion them. In this spirit, we celebrate the collective achievements of our farmers and reaffirm our commitment to their success.

Happy reading, and here's to a prosperous year ahead!

## Emelda Setthako

Editor in Chief, Letsema

# FROM MEC'S DESK



## FOREWORD

As we nearing the end of another year, 2024, marked by both triumphs and struggles we are aware that a lot still needs to be strove-d and strived. As a country we are now in thirty years since the birth of our democratic nation. The entire country reflected on the considerable progress made in building a constitutional order anchored on freedom, equality and human rights for all. As a department we are on the same foot prints of making sure that all our plans, goals and strategies are about the needs and pleas of our people. Re gata mo go ya pele e gatileng teng, ka go netefatsa fa re isa ditirelo ko bathong.

In this third quarter of the year, large parts of our province are reporting reasonable to poor veld and livestock conditions, and many farmers have yet to receive sufficient rains before planting. The impact on the summer crop harvest has been particularly stark, with the 2024-25 seasons' production plummeting by a large margin compared to the previous year. One of the most significant culprits behind this downturn has been the El Niño-induced drought that struck early in 2024. On the other hand, veld fires have also resulted in damage to grazing land and infrastructure, as well as contributing to livestock fatalities throughout the entire province.

However as a Department we are consoled by the fact that we have established a good rapport with North West Fire Association. More recently during our strategic session in Matlosana, they further recommitted their posture in working with both communal and elite farmers throughout the province.

Despite these setbacks, viewing this period as a temporary downturn rather than a long-term trend is important. This is above us, ours is to continue seeking divine intervention from above. However, we are all hopeful that soon things will be back to normal and there shall be rain at the end. Letsididi le tla re aparela.

Our Letsema instalment is packed with an edifying and didactic roster. Our metric of choosing stories has always been about your interest as our reader, nothing else. Our roll

this quarter is touching base on transforming lives through our Agricultural support which continues to face- lift the future of our farmers. When we see potential, we knuckle and suckle on it as a Department. Through the unemployed agricultural graduate program, the Department donated 30 pregnant Bonsmara heifers to Mr. Thamsanqa Rabasotho. This is a young farmer who shows resilience and determination towards his craft.

More recently the department has officially launched the Presidential Economic Stimulus (PES), in Makgobistad Village. In alignment with the President's request, a whopping budget of 48 million rand will be put into good usage in boosting agricultural productivity, and job creation and supporting our deserving farmers in adapting to the evolving demands of the sector.

In further positioning Kgora as the ultimate Agricultural training centre in the province, a Citrus Information Day was held at this stately institution. This citrus day aligns with the department's mission and vision to diversify agricultural participation while creating lucrative opportunities for mostly historically disadvantaged communities within the province. Of importance is that it should be boldly stated that black agrarians are lagging in this citrus segment henceforth such platforms are a priority.

In conclusion, while the third quarter of 2024 has brought significant challenges for South Africa's agricultural sector, the combination of historical resilience and forward-looking strategies offers a glimmer of hope for a brighter future. Again I further urge all our farmers to be on the lookout for daily extreme weather warnings and implement risk-reduction measures especially towards livestock and poultry agronomists.

I thank you. Ndiya Bulela

*MEC: Madoda Sambatha*

MEC-Madoda Sambatha  
Department of Agriculture and Rural Development



Deputy Minister for Agriculture Nokuzola Capa, MEC Madoda Sambatha Head of Department Thupi Mokhata and other senior managers were present to celebrate Thamsanqa's achievements.

# EMPOWERING THE FUTURE

## YOUNG FARMER RECEIVES PREGNANT BONSMARA AS A STARTUP BOOST

Thamsanqa Rabasotho, a North-West University graduate, proudly receives 30 pregnant Bonsmara cattle and a bull, a transformative boost from the Department's initiative to empower unemployed agricultural graduates.

By Tshegofatso Leapile

The Department's Unemployed Agricultural Graduate Programme has once again demonstrated its commitment to empowering young farmers. Thamsanqa Rabasotho, a North-West University graduate and alumnus of the programme, was awarded 30 pregnant Bonsmara cattle and one bull as part of the Department's initiative to support unemployed agricultural graduates.

An animal scientist with a passion for farming, Thamsanqa began his journey at a young age. While completing his 24-month graduate programme, he saved part of his stipend to buy cattle. In 2016, he secured land from the Lekung Village Tribal Authority and established his farming enterprise, Thandi and Thami Trading and Projects. Over the years, he has not only grown his business but also pursued further studies, earning a BSc Honours in Animal Science, AGB New Venture Creation, and training in piggery and business development through department-sponsored programs.

During the official cattle handover ceremony, Rural Development Director Mr Malakia Matlabe highlighted the Department's commitment to supporting graduates. "Through the Comprehensive Agricultural Support Programme (CASP), the department supports a minimum of five beneficiaries yearly. Thamsanqa is one of two beneficiaries who qualified for funding this year, with the department committing R1.5 million towards their ventures," he explained.

Deputy Minister for Agriculture Nokuzola Capa and MEC Madoda Sambatha were present to celebrate Thamsanqa's achievements. MEC Sambatha acknowledged the challenges faced by graduates, stating, "Five beneficiaries is a small number compared to the vast pool of agricultural graduates we produce each year. However, with programs like these, I am confident we are building a pipeline of

commercial farmers who will uplift local communities." Sambatha also praised the North West Province for its unique partnership with a university to equip graduates with business development skills.

Thamsanqa, who was introduced to farming by his late father, has ambitious goals. He envisions becoming a registered stud breeder, venturing into animal feed production, and offering agricultural training. Reflecting on his journey, he said, "In the future, I will tell my success story about how the department supported me and how I contributed to the development of other young farmers. As young black farmers, we must support each other, start with what we have, and meet the government halfway."

Offering advice to his peers, Thamsanqa encouraged farmers to embrace lifelong learning and adopt a business mindset. "Farming is hard work, but when treated as a business, it has the potential to create sustainable jobs and drive economic growth," he concluded.

This initiative underscores the department's dedication to empowering the next generation of farmers and fostering a thriving agricultural sector in South Africa.



From left: MEC Madoda Sambatha, beneficiary Thamsanqa Rabasotho, and Deputy Minister of Agriculture Nokuzola Capa at Lekung Village during the official cattle handover ceremony.

# Driving Agricultural Transformation

## R48 Million Presidential Economic Stimulus Unveiled

By Thebe Itumeleng

The North West Department of Agriculture, in partnership with the national Department of Agriculture, has strengthened its focus on food security and economic growth through the Presidential Economic Stimulus (PES) Initiative. This was marked by the R48 million Phase 3 launch in Makgobistad village near Mahlkeng, led by Deputy Minister Nokuzola Capa and MEC Madoda Sambatha.

With a dedicated budget of R48 million, this phase is poised to transform the agricultural landscape in the North West Province. A total of 2,400 beneficiaries across all four districts will gain access to critical agricultural inputs, fostering self-sufficiency and sustainable livelihoods.

Since its inception in 2020, the PES has made significant strides in addressing unemployment and economic disparities, having created over 1.5 million work opportunities nationally. Phase 3 builds on this foundation by targeting subsistence farming and vulnerable households with tailored packages that include large stock, small stock, poultry, and piggy farming resources.

Speaking at the launch, Deputy Minister Capa highlighted the PES's integral role in revitalizing rural economies. "This initiative is a demonstration of our commitment to strengthening the agricultural sector and supporting our communities. I urge the youth and women of Makgobistad and beyond to seize these opportunities to drive South Africa's agricultural growth," she said.

During the event, households from the Ratlou Local Municipality received essential gardening tools and livestock feed, which will enable them to enhance food production and agricultural productivity.

Kgosimoruti Erick Hassen, a subsistence farmer, expressed gratitude for the support. "This intervention has come at a crucial time when my animals are

struggling due to drought. The provision of Lucerne feed will make a significant difference," Hassen remarked.

Similarly, Goitseone Lekgotla, an aspiring vegetable producer, received garden tools that will help her expand her farming operations. "The tools are an invaluable resource, and I am grateful to the government for recognizing the importance of small-scale farming," she stated.

Farmers and community members are encouraged to visit their nearest agricultural offices to access various support initiatives under the PES. The Department remains committed to working with local stakeholders to ensure the successful implementation of these programs and the realization of their long-term objectives.

As the PES continues to roll out, it is clear that this initiative is not only improving livelihoods but also laying the groundwork for a resilient and inclusive agricultural sector.

MEC Madoda Sambatha and Deputy Minister Nokuzola Capa distributing livestock feed and agricultural inputs to beneficiaries, reinforcing government support for subsistence farmers.



Deputy Minister Nokuzola Capa addressing attendees in Makgobistad village, emphasizing agriculture's role in food security and economic empowerment.



Gardening tools provided to households in the Ratlou Local Municipality are empowering communities to maintain sustainable food gardens.



MEC Madoda Sambatha and Citrus Growers Development Agency officials demonstrating how to plant a Palmer orange tree for farmers.

By Tshegofatso Leapile

The North West Province is poised for significant growth in its citrus sector, with six registered black citrus growers currently operating in the region. In partnership with the Citrus Growers Development Agency, the Provincial Department of Agriculture and Rural Development is working diligently to expand the number of citrus farmers and increase the hectares planted annually, all while ensuring that current growers continue to achieve high yields.

Over the years, the Department has been a steadfast supporter of citrus farmers, offering training and extension services to ensure the long-term sustainability of citrus farming in the province.

The recent Citrus Growers Farmers Day, held at the Kgora Farmers Training Center in Mahlkeng, was a key platform for emerging farmers and industry experts to exchange insights and best practices in citrus farming. The Department continues to create opportunities for farmers to stay informed on market trends, citrus cultivars, and the necessary quality and quantity standards for success in this growing industry.

"As South Africa stands as the world's second-largest exporter of oranges, lemons, and grapefruits, forming robust technical teams within the citrus sector is essential to its continued success. These teams foster knowledge-sharing through interactive learning," highlighted Yolanda Ntlhakaza.

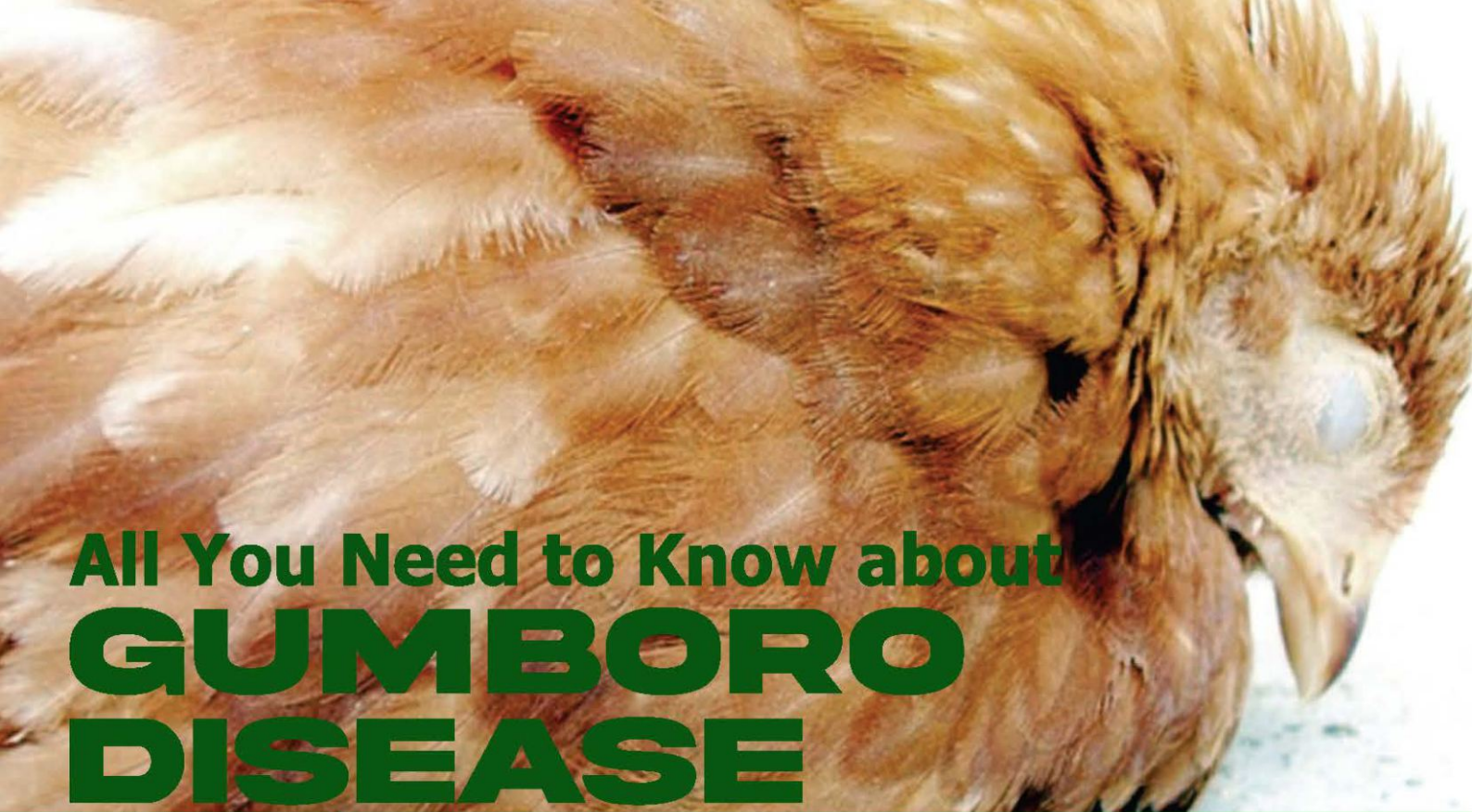
The discussions at these farmers' days covered essential topics including production requirements, technical support, financing strategies, market demand, and access. MEC Madoda Sambatha expressed his optimism about the expansion of the citrus sector and the potential for increasing the province's export capacity.

"Supporting citrus businesses presents significant advantages, given both the strong local market and the growing international demand. We are currently developing a business study to better support existing citrus growers and new entrants into the sector. Government backing for viable businesses is key to creating sustainable jobs, which will ultimately reduce poverty and unemployment in the province," said Sambatha.



Madoda Sambatha addressing citrus growers at the Farmers Day held at Kgora.





# All You Need to Know about **GUMBORO DISEASE**

Compiled by Katlego Hamale

Gumboro disease, also known as Infectious Bursal Disease (IBD), is a highly contagious viral infection that primarily affects chickens, especially those under 6 weeks of age. The disease targets the immune system, specifically the bursa of Fabricius, which is vital for the development of the bird's immune response. Known for its rapid spread and potential to cause significant losses in poultry farming, Gumboro disease is a serious concern for the poultry industry worldwide.

Here's everything you need to know about this potentially devastating disease, its symptoms, prevention, and control measures.

#### **CAUSES:**

- Caused by the Infectious Bursal Disease Virus (IBDV)
- Spread through contaminated faeces, feed, water, and contact with infected birds

#### **SYMPTOMS:**

- Fever
- Depression
- Loss of appetite
- Weight loss
- Ruffled feathers
- Diarrhea
- Swelling of the cloacal bursa (a gland near the vent)

#### **TRANSMISSION:**

- Direct contact with infected birds
- Contaminated feed, water, and equipment
- Infected eggs

#### **PREVENTION AND CONTROL:**

- Vaccination
- Biosecurity measures (cleanliness, disinfection)
- Quarantine and isolation
- Proper ventilation and hygiene
- Monitoring for symptoms

#### **TREATMENT:**

- No specific treatment available
- Supportive care (hydration, nutrition)
- Antibiotics to prevent secondary infections

#### **IMPACT:**

- Significant economic losses in poultry industry
- Reduced egg production and quality
- Increased mortality rates





# Makumo Multi Cooperative

## Empowering Youth and Pioneering Agricultural Innovation

### Article by Masego Tshilo.

Since its founding in 2020, Makumo Multi Cooperative has emerged as a trailblazer in youth empowerment and agricultural innovation. Spearheaded by the visionary leadership of Jane "Windy" Kungoane, the cooperative is committed to nurturing young talent, especially female youth, to ensure the sustainability and future growth of the agricultural sector. With a dedicated team of five members, including two young women in leadership roles, Makumo stands as a testament to capacity building and skills transfer for the next generation of agricultural leaders.

Specializing in the cultivation of diverse crops such as onions, spinach, beetroot, mustard, and butternut, the cooperative's product selection is guided by nutritional value, market demand, and climate resilience. Their mission focuses on improving livelihoods, increasing yields, and championing sustainable farming practices, positioning them as vital contributors to the region's food security.

An outstanding feature of Makumo's operations is its resourcefulness. By utilizing borrowed backyard spaces from neighbouring households, the cooperative has expanded its production capacity without the need for extensive land resources. This innovative approach has enabled them to consistently supply fresh vegetables to local markets, creating job opportunities in the community, with one permanent staff member and up to four seasonal workers employed during harvest periods.

Makumo has benefited significantly from the support of the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, receiving vital extension services including training in pest control, soil fertility management, crop marketing strategies, and business administration. According to Mma Kungoane, a key member of the cooperative, "The support we've received has been invaluable, and while challenges like limited land and water persist, we are determined to grow beyond a backyard garden. This cooperative has incredible potential."



Meet Jane Kungoane, Leader of Makumo Multi Cooperative with Fresh Produce: Beetroot Straight from the Field



One Permanent Employee Harvesting Hope | A dedicated permanent employee of Makumo Multi Cooperative harvesting fresh vegetables, creating employment and bringing hope to the local community

Despite the challenges posed by climate change, market fluctuations, and resource constraints, Makumo Multi Cooperative continues to thrive. Their future vision includes diversifying their crop offerings, adding value through processing, and exploring new markets. Their resilience and innovative approach are prime examples of how youth-led agricultural initiatives can drive meaningful change in the sector.

Makumo Multi Cooperative is not just empowering young people; it is laying the foundation for a sustainable, inclusive future in agriculture. Their story highlights the power of youth-driven agricultural development and demonstrates that with the right support and vision, the future of farming is indeed bright.

## Strengthening Livestock

# Biosecurity

## in the North West Province:

## A Critical Measure against Animal Disease Outbreaks

Compiled by Thebe Itumeleng

The North West Province's agricultural sector is proactively addressing the persistent challenge of animal disease outbreaks, which pose significant socio-economic threats. In response, the North West Department of Agriculture and Rural Development has taken decisive steps to fortify the province's livestock biosecurity.

This includes constructing biosecurity wheel baths at various livestock auction kraal sales pens—a move aligned with the Agricultural Produce Agents ACT (APAA) 12 of 1992. This legislation mandates stringent biosecurity compliance to safeguard market access and control the spread of diseases within the livestock sector.

### The Role of Auction Facilities in Disease Control

Livestock auction facilities are vital nodes in the livestock production value chain, enabling rural farmers to access markets while serving as a critical checkpoint for detecting and managing animal diseases. The introduction of biosecurity wheel baths at these facilities underscores the Department's commitment to reducing the transmission of pathogens that could jeopardize both animal health and market stability.

### Biosecurity Wheel Baths: A Key Intervention

Biosecurity wheel baths are designed to sanitize the tyres of vehicles entering and exiting auction facilities. These baths contain disinfectant solutions that eliminate disease-causing agents, preventing their spread between farms and regions. This proactive measure bolsters animal health, ensuring farmer profitability and contributing to food security.

To date, seven biosecurity wheel baths have been constructed across the province. These installations adhere to the standards set by the Agricultural Produce Agents' Council which oversees the regulation of livestock auction facilities.

### APAC's Role and Mandate

The Agricultural Produce Agents' Council (APAC) derives its mandate from the APAA and is responsible for:

- Protecting against dishonest practices within the agricultural sector.
- Ensuring the integrity of agents in the fresh produce, export, and livestock sectors.
- Promoting the transformation and development of South Africa's agricultural industry.
- Under this framework, all agents in the livestock marketing chain must be registered with APAC to conduct business, ensuring accountability and compliance.

### Addressing the Impact of Disease Outbreaks

Infectious diseases can have a devastating impact on livestock operations, resulting in reduced productivity and financial losses. Larger operations are particularly vulnerable, as the rapid spread of disease among numerous animals can amplify these effects.

While government institutions and policies provide critical support, the responsibility for maintaining animal health lies heavily on livestock owners and stakeholders across the value chain. Challenges such as non-compliance, undisclosed animal health issues, and unauthorized animal movements exacerbate the risks.

### Strengthened Biosecurity Measures

To mitigate disease transmission at auction facilities, the Department has implemented rigorous biosecurity protocols, particularly in the arrival area (dirty area):

#### Vehicle Sanitation

Vehicles entering auction sites must follow a Standard Operating Procedure for cleaning, developed by biosecurity practitioners and approved by veterinarians. Wheel dips or sprays are mandatory for sanitizing tyres.

#### Animal Health Checks

Animals are inspected upon arrival for signs of disease, lesions, or parasites.

#### Visitor and Vehicle Control

Logbooks track all visitors, vehicles, and equipment entering or exiting biosecure areas.

Dedicated access gates and foot dips ensure controlled movement within the facility.

#### A Collaborative Effort

Effective disease control requires a coordinated effort among government agencies, livestock owners, auction facilities, and biosecurity experts. The success of these measures depends on the integrity, responsibility, and activity of all players in the livestock value chain.

Through the construction of biosecurity wheel baths and the implementation of robust disease control measures, the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development is paving the way for a more resilient and sustainable livestock sector in the North West Province. These initiatives not only protect animal health but also preserve market access, ensuring the continued growth and stability of the province's agricultural economy.



# Livestock Management Programme

By Oratile Kgotle & Mojaki Moeng

It is important to note that each farmer must seek further information that will allow them to have a comprehensive vaccination program which suits their specific needs.

- Only healthy animals can be vaccinated to ensure proper protection
- For effective vaccines to be effective, they must be kept cold (Fridge) from the time of buying until they are administered to animals (maintain cold chain).
- All reusable syringes and needles must be washed using clean water and sterilised by boiling before re-use to vaccinate animals otherwise they will spread to animals vaccinated.
- There are two types of vaccines on the market, dead vaccine and live vaccine. The live vaccine comes in two bottles, one with a whitish powder and the second one with a water mix and dissolved powder. The dead vaccines come already mixed as a cloudy solution, which is ready for use. Farmers are discouraged from injecting two live vaccines to animals on the same day or less than two weeks apart e.g. lumpy skin and Rift Valley fever vaccines. The live vaccines work by causing a mild form of the disease, therefore using more than one at a time will be similar to infecting the animal with two diseases, which can affect the effectiveness of the vaccination.
- Most vaccines must be injected under the skin, the shoulder area of animals has enough loose skin for easy vaccination.



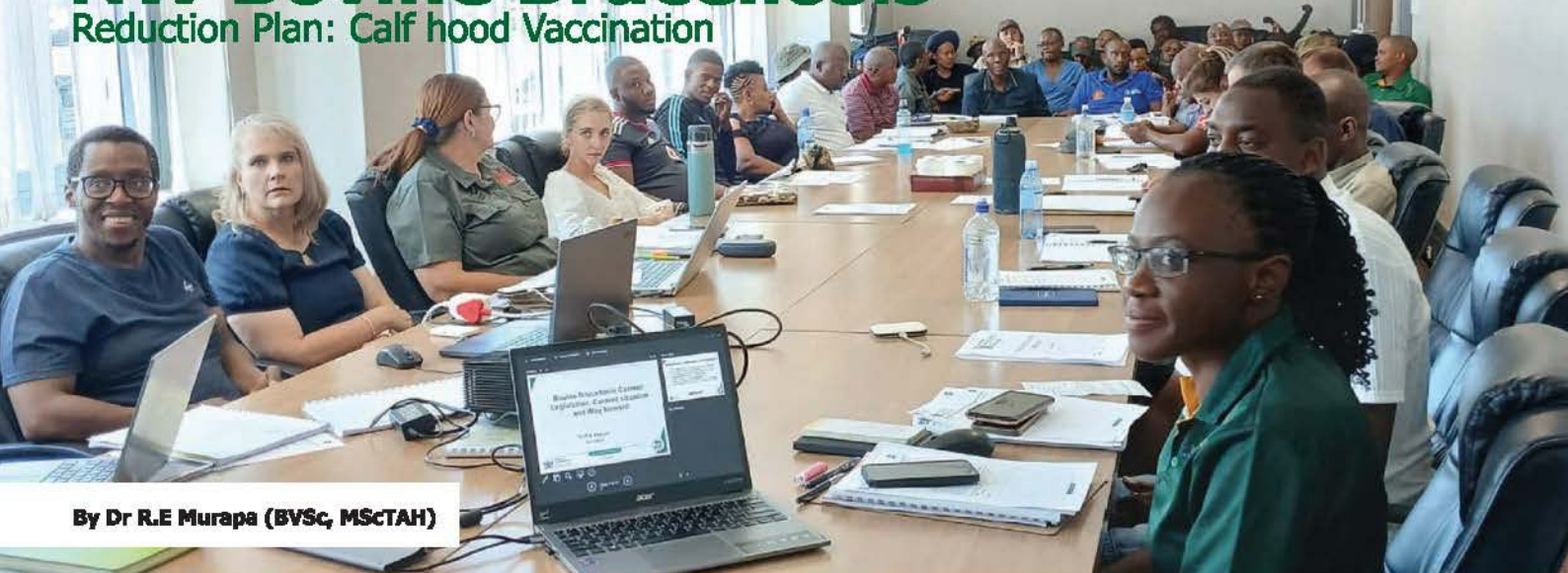


## SHEEP AND GOAT HEALTH PLAN

Activity	Period
<b>Anthrax vaccination</b> Is an infectious disease caused by <i>Bacillus anthracis</i>	March -September
<b>Pulpy kidney</b> Is a disease of sheep caused by bacteria that produce toxins when the diet changes.	Kids (3-4 months old) are vaccinated 2 times with an interval of 4-6 weeks. Adults are vaccinated annually. Vaccinate 2 weeks before dosing or introducing them to lush pasture
<b>Rift Valley Fever</b> Is the peracute or acute mosquito-borne zoonotic disease of domestic and wild ruminants? It is characterised by abortions and neonatal mortality in ruminant animals	July – September
<b>Bluetongue</b> Is a viral disease of ruminants, it is caused by bluetongue virus (BTV) and is transmitted by the midges of <i>Culicoides imicola</i> , <i>culicids</i> variants and other <i>culicids</i>	End of the breeding season (3 vaccines 3 weeks apart should be administered.)
<b>Pasteurella</b> Is stress related, caused by adverse weather conditions, weaning and change of diet	April- May The animals should be vaccinated preferably 2 months before a possible stress time
<b>Dipping</b>	At least a month in summer and 2 times in winter. Use dip that last longer e.g. deadline.
<b>Dosing (Deworming)</b>	September- January –April
<b>Vitamin A and Phosphorus licks</b>	April- August
<b>Castration and tailing docking</b>	May- July
<b>Tattooing</b>	1 Month and Above

# NW Bovine Brucellosis

## Reduction Plan: Calf hood Vaccination



By Dr R.E Murapa (BVSc, MScTAH)

Bovine Brucellosis is endemic (widespread) in South Africa, and the number of affected animals and herds continues to rise yearly. Bovine Brucellosis is an infectious bacterial disease caused by *Brucella abortus*. The disease affects both humans and cattle. In cattle the bacteria causes reproductive problems, abortions in pregnant cows, infertility, retained placenta and orchitis (inflammation of the testicles) in bulls. Brucellosis is a non-fatal disease, infected animals may appear healthy but can spread the disease. Brucellosis has a huge impact on commercial and communal farmers due to economic losses in livestock production.

Transmission from animal to animal is through direct or indirect contact with contaminated materials and fluids such as aborted tissue, after-birth tissue (placenta) and uterine discharges. In humans, consuming contaminated unpasteurised milk and handling infected after-birth material can lead to infection. The disease spreads from farm to farm or herd to herd when farmers buy brucellosis-infected cattle as part of herd replacement. Therefore farmers are advised to insist on proof (BR 3 certificate) by a state veterinarian from the seller that the animals that they are buying originate from a Brucellosis-free herd.

The economic impact that the disease has had in South Africa for many years led to the development of a Bovine Brucellosis Scheme. Farmers are encouraged to join the brucellosis control scheme, all information on the scheme is available at your local state veterinary office.

Brucellosis is a state-controlled disease according to the Animal Disease Act, of 1984 (Act 35 of 1984). Animals that test positive for brucellosis cannot be treated or cured but should be sent to the abattoir for slaughter under the supervision of a veterinary official. The animals cannot be sold at an auction as this creates a big risk of spreading the disease to innocent buyers. The disease is a herd condition and therefore if one animal tests positive in a herd, the whole herd is considered as potentially having the infected. The removal of positive animals is important because it reduces the risk

of spreading to the other cattle within the herd and the herd can be cleared of this disease.



To control Brucellosis, the North West Veterinary Service has launched a Brucellosis Reduction Plan (BRP) campaign in all four Districts in the province whereby the plan was presented to all veterinary services officials.

To control Brucellosis, the North West Veterinary Service has launched a Brucellosis Reduction Plan (BRP) campaign in all four Districts in the province whereby the plan was presented to all veterinary services officials. The plan aims to reduce the number of cases of brucellosis by using a multipronged approach to the control of brucellosis. The BRP involves a 7 pillar approach that was adapted from the National Brucellosis Control Policy: (1) Vaccination, (2) Education, (3) Testing, (4) Slaughter, (5) Movement control, (6) Reporting and (7) Evaluation of the effectiveness of control measures. Vaccination is the most effective tool in the control of brucellosis through the reduction of the number of abortions and the spread of the disease. It is compulsory by law to vaccinate all heifer calves (4 to 8 months) against Bovine Brucellosis. Hence North West Veterinary Services has launched a mass vaccination campaign based on Table 1 below. Calves are the future breeding herd, if the future breeding herd is protected then we will be on the path to eradication of this devastating disease.

**Table 1:**  
Showing vaccination protocol for different age categories

Age	Vaccine	Level of herd Protection
4 to 5 months	S19 (only use once)	70%
8 to 9 months	RB51 ( 1 <sup>st</sup> booster)	91%
15 to 16 months	RB51 (2 <sup>nd</sup> booster)	97%

The first vaccination at 4 to 5 months is done using the vaccine S19. This vaccine can only be used in heifers between 4 and 8 months. The use of the S19 vaccine for a second time in an animal or a herd is illegal in South Africa. The booster for 8 months and the one at 15 to 16 months is done using the RB51 vaccine. Farmers are advised to record the date of birth of their calves and to take note of when they are 4 months old so that they can contact their local Animal health technician to vaccinate the heifer calves. The next two boosters are important to increase the level of immunity and farmers are advised not to miss these booster vaccinations. Your Animal Health Technician

can do all vaccinations. Vaccine is available at all state vet offices and is for free. Bulls and pregnant cows must not be vaccinated for Bovine Brucellosis.

If you have reproductive problems such as abortions please contact your local state vet office so that disease investigation can be done. Testing for brucellosis is done on animals that are over 18 months old. The success of the Reduction plan largely depends on the cooperation from farmers and different interested stakeholders with the state veterinary services. A Farmer who cares for his/her cattle will protect them against brucellosis.



**Veterinary staff participate in a workshop on the Bovine Brucellosis Reduction Plan.**

# First Cohort of **NARYSEC** Graduates Ready to Transform Agriculture in North West

By Thebe Itumeleng

In a landmark moment for the North West Province, the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD), in collaboration with the National Department of Agriculture, Land Reform, and Rural Development (DALRRD), celebrated the graduation of 32 young farmers from the National Rural Youth Service Corps (NARYSEC) program. Held in Mahikeng this November, the ceremony represented a pivotal stride in empowering youth within the agricultural sector.

The graduates, having completed six months of intensive training at the AgRISETA-accredited Kgora Farmer Training Centre, are now equipped with vital skills in plant and animal production. Of the 45 initial participants, 17 earned certificates in Plant Production, while 15 specialized in Animal Production.

A notable highlight was the advanced training undertaken by the Animal Production graduates at the Agricultural Research Council (ARC) Irene campus. Here, they gained expertise in Artificial Insemination, earning DALRRD registration as certified inseminators. This qualification positions them to offer professional insemination services to livestock farmers, addressing a crucial need in the agricultural sector.

Tiisetso Makgale, a representative of DALRRD, lauded the NARYSEC program, which has been a cornerstone of youth empowerment since its inception in 2010. "NARYSEC training extends beyond numbers; each trainee is actively involved in community agricultural projects," Makgale said, emphasizing the program's mission to tackle unemployment and poverty among rural youth aged 18-35.

These young farmers are now set to become change makers in their communities, driving agricultural growth, creating jobs, and building sustainable livelihoods.

MEC Madoda Sambatha, in his address to the graduates, emphasized the critical role of youth in transforming the province's economy. "These 32 graduates are agents of hope, empowered to drive economic growth, foster social cohesion, and build better futures," he said, urging them to leverage their skills to advance both the agricultural sector and the broader economy.

The success of this program reflects the government's commitment to targeted skills development and community empowerment as tools to unlock the country's full potential.

As these young agricultural leaders embark on their journey, they carry the collective hopes of their communities and the agricultural sector at large. Their achievements signal a bright future for South African agriculture and a renewed commitment to rural development.



MEC Madoda Sambatha addressing the first cohort of 32 young farmers graduating from the National Rural Youth Service Corps (NARYSEC) program in Mahikeng.



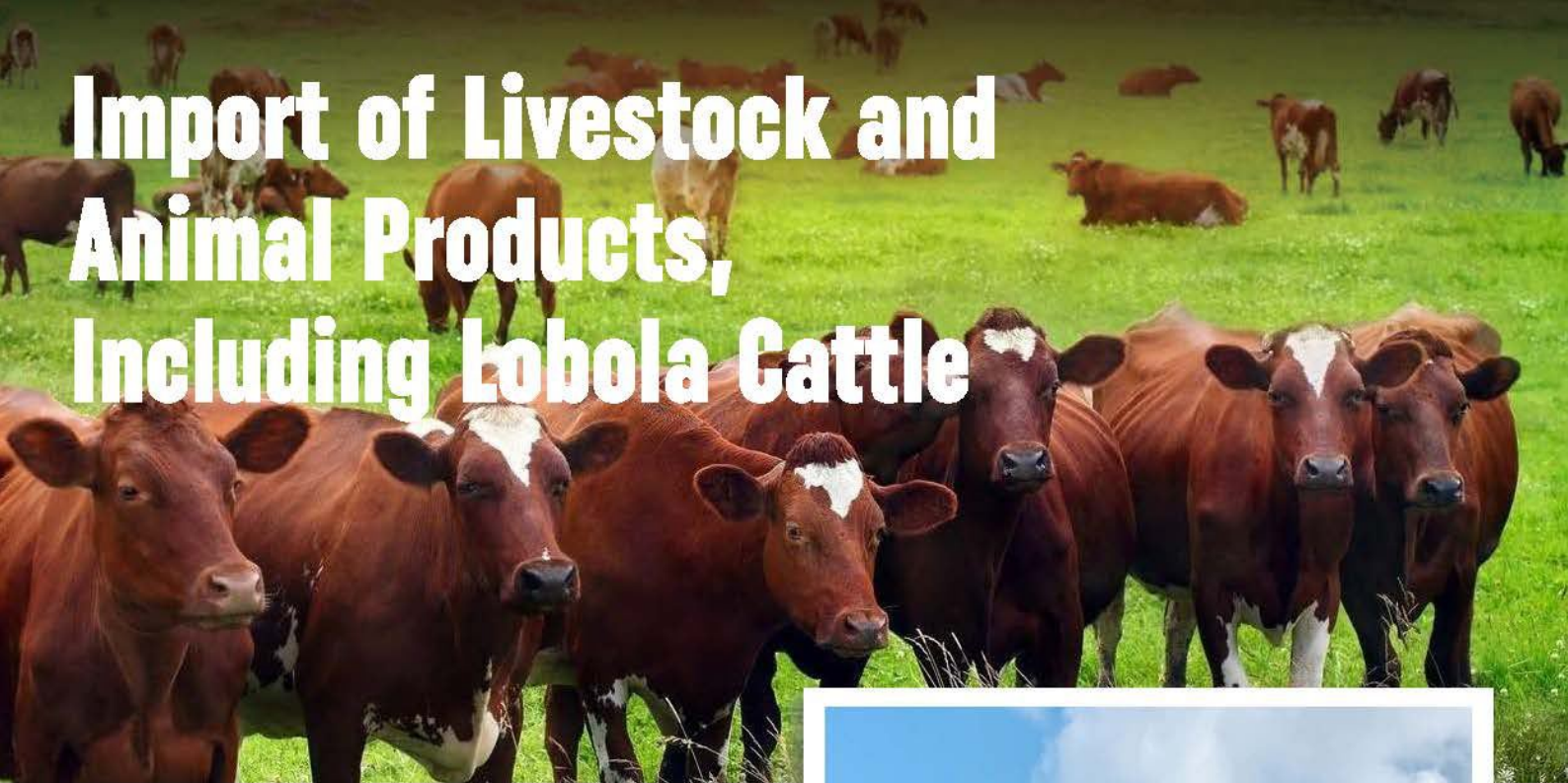
Celebratory moment as 32 young farmers graduate from the NARYSEC program, ready to impact their communities with newfound agricultural expertise.



Kgora Farmer Training Centre Manager, Thuthukani Hlangu, delivers his congratulatory remarks to the 32 graduates of the National Rural Youth Service Corps (NARYSEC) program during the graduation ceremony in Mahikeng.



# Import of Livestock and Animal Products, Including Lobola Cattle



By Oratile Kgotle and Mojaki Moeng

## Did You Know?

The importation of animals and animal products into South Africa is governed by strict regulations to prevent the introduction of diseases, pests, and other health risks that could affect local animal populations and human health.

## General Requirements for Importing Animals and Animal Products:

### Import Permits

Importers must obtain an import permit from the relevant authorities, such as the Department of Agriculture (DoA) the Directorate of Animal Health.

### Health Certificates

Animals and animal products must be accompanied by a health certificate issued by the veterinary authorities in the exporting country. This document certifies that the animals or products are disease-free and meet South Africa's health standards.

### Quarantine

Imported animals may be required to undergo quarantine upon arrival at South African borders. This ensures they are free from diseases or pests that could pose risks to local animals or human health.

### Veterinary Inspection

On arrival, South African veterinarians will inspect the animals or products to verify compliance with health regulations.



## For more information, contact:

Department of Agriculture (DoA): 012 319 6000  
NW DARD, Veterinary International Trade Sub-Directorate: 066 190 9144

Or visit your local State Veterinary Office

Adhering to these regulations ensures the health and safety of South Africa's animal population and human communities.



# STERILIZATION

## All You Need to Know About Sterilization in Companion Animals/Pets (Dogs and Cats)

Dr Koketso Makhubedu

### 1. What is Sterilization?

Sterilization is a surgical procedure that involves removing an animal's reproductive organs. In males, it is commonly referred to as neutering or castration, where the testicles are removed. In females, the procedure is known as spaying, which involves the removal of the ovaries and uterus.

Sterilization not only prevents unwanted pregnancies but also helps to manage and improve overall animal health and behaviour.

### 2. Benefits of Sterilization

Sterilization offers numerous advantages for both the pet and their owners. Some key benefits include:

#### Behavioural Benefits:

**Reduces wandering and escaping:** Sterilized pets are less likely to roam or attempt to find mates, which can lead to dangerous situations like getting lost or injured.

**Less marking of territory:** Neutered pets are less inclined to mark territory with urine, which can be a common behaviour in unsterilized pets.

**Decreased aggression:** Sterilization can reduce dominance behaviours, including aggression toward other animals or humans.

#### Health Benefits:

**Prevents certain cancers:** Sterilization significantly lowers the risk of testicular and ovarian cancer in pets.

**Reduces prostate disease risk:** Neutering male pets can prevent or reduce the chances of prostate issues later in life.

**Decreases mammary cancer risk:** Spaying female pets reduces the risk of mammary cancer, particularly if done before their first heat cycle.

In summary, sterilization helps improve both your pet's behaviour and health, creating a happier, healthier life for your companion.

### 3. Optimal Timing

The ideal age for sterilization is typically around 6 months, though the best time can vary depending on factors like the pet's breed, size, and overall health. It is essential to discuss this with your vet to determine the optimal time for your pet based on their specific needs.

#### The Procedure

Sterilization is a routine, straightforward procedure, often performed on an outpatient basis. Here's what to expect during the process:

**Pre-Surgery Instructions:** Your vet will usually advise withholding food for about 12 hours before the surgery to ensure your pet's stomach is empty.

**Surgical Process:** The procedure itself is relatively quick, and pets are typically ready to go home the same day.

#### Post-Surgery Care:

**Exercise restriction:** After surgery, your pet should avoid excessive physical activity for several days to allow for proper healing.

**Diet:** Once your pet is home, offer food in small amounts and monitor for any signs of nausea.

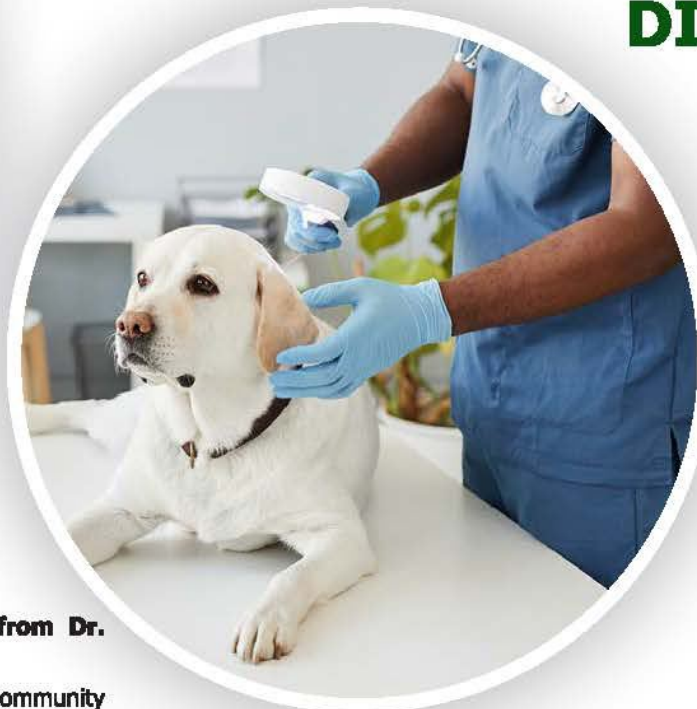
**After-effects of anaesthesia:** It's normal for pets to show signs of depression or lack of appetite due to anaesthesia, but this typically lasts for no more than a day.

**Incision care:** Monitor the surgical site for any signs of infection or excessive licking.

It's essential to ensure the incision heals properly and doesn't become irritated.

Sterilization is a simple, effective way to enhance your pet's health, reduce unwanted behaviour, and help prevent the overpopulation of pets. By consulting with your vet and understanding the benefits, timing, and aftercare, you can make a well-informed decision that will benefit both you and your pet.

# CLOSTRIDIUM DISEASE



## Understanding Clostridium Disease: Insights from Dr. Kgothatso Sehoole

To educate and share vital information with the farming community of the North West, the Letsema Newsletter editorial team sat down with Dr. Kgothatso Sehoole, a State Veterinarian Doctor, to unpack the details of Clostridium disease and its impact on livestock health. In this conversation, Dr Sehoole sheds light on the nature of the disease, its symptoms, prevention strategies, and how farmers can protect their livestock from this potentially deadly threat.

**LETSEMA:** What is Clostridium, and why is it significant in agriculture?

**Dr Kgothatso Sehoole:** Clostridium is a bacterial disease that affects livestock and other species, though, in this article, we will focus on its impact on livestock. While Clostridium is not contagious and does not spread from one animal to another, it can result in sudden deaths when an animal's health is compromised. Clostridium can cause rapid death rates and severe losses for farmers in a short period, making it a significant concern in agriculture.

**LETSEMA:** How prevalent are Clostridium-related diseases in livestock, and what are the economic implications for farmers?

**Dr Kgothatso Sehoole:** Clostridium bacteria are naturally present in the environment and in the gut of livestock, where they serve useful purposes. However, they can become problematic under certain conditions, such as compromised herd management or injuries. These outbreaks can lead to significant economic losses for farmers, as the rapid death rates associated with Clostridium infections can decimate livestock numbers quickly.

**LETSEMA:** What are the primary sources of Clostridium bacteria in livestock environments?

**Dr Kgothatso Sehoole:** The environment, particularly soil and organic material like vegetation, can harbor Clostridium bacteria. The gut of livestock serves as a natural habitat for the bacteria.

**LETSEMA:** How do Clostridium bacteria spread and infect livestock?

**Dr Kgothatso Sehoole:** Clostridium is non-contagious, meaning it doesn't spread from one animal to another. However, infections can occur in large numbers or individually depending on the cause:

**Large numbers:** This can happen due to contaminated husbandry procedures, such as branding, tail docking, or dehorning with unsterilized equipment. Overfeeding of food supplements, particularly high starch concentrations, can also trigger an outbreak.

**Single cases:** Infections are often linked to injuries, such as fighting or wounds caused by sharp objects.

**LETSEMA:** What are the common clinical signs of Clostridium infections in livestock?

**Dr Kgothatso Sehoole:** Clinical signs of Clostridium infections vary depending on the type of Clostridium bacteria involved. In South Africa, common Clostridium diseases affecting livestock include black quarter, pulpy kidney disease, anthrax, malignant oedema, lamb dysentery, and enterotoxemia. The most consistent clinical sign is sudden death, either in individual animals or a group, with a high mortality rate. In some cases, animals may show signs of illness for a few days before death.

**LETSEMA:** How can farmers differentiate between Clostridium-related diseases and other health issues?



**Dr Kgothatso Sehoole:** It's always best to consult a veterinarian, as sudden death in livestock can be caused by various other health issues. Only proper diagnostic tests can confirm if the cause is Clostridium.

**LETSEMA:** What diagnostic tools are available for detecting Clostridium infections?

**Dr Kgothatso Sehoole**

- Clinical signs
- Post-mortem examination
- Blood smears
- Laboratory tests

**LETSEMA:** What vaccination strategies are effective against Clostridium-related diseases?

**Dr Kgothatso Sehoole:** Vaccination protocols vary based on the animal's age, the primary vaccination course, and the risk factors, such as specific husbandry activities and feed supplements. State veterinarians or private vets can provide guidance on vaccination plans. The government covers vaccines for certain Clostridium diseases under state control, offering them for free to farmers. Other vaccines that protect against a broader range of Clostridium bacteria are available at the farmer's expense.

**LETSEMA:** What biosecurity measures can farmers implement to reduce Clostridium transmission risk?

**Dr Kgothatso Sehoole :**

- Vaccination remains the primary prevention method.
- Wounds should be treated promptly as they can act as entry points for Clostridium bacteria.
- Feed supplements should be given cautiously to avoid over-supplementation, and farmers should consult with experts if unsure about proper feeding practices.

**LETSEMA:** Is Clostridium curable?

**Dr Kgothatso Sehoole:** While recovery is possible in some cases, Clostridium diseases often lead to rapid death, making treatment difficult. Early intervention and preventive measures are key to managing the disease.

**LETSEMA:** How can farmers manage and care for infected animals to reduce mortality and morbidity?

**Dr Kgothatso Sehoole:** Farmers should seek professional advice to manage infected animals and ensure preventive measures are in place to protect the rest of the herd.

**LETSEMA:** What simple, practical steps can farmers take today to reduce Clostridium-related disease risk?

**Dr Kgothatso Sehoole:** Farmers should prioritize vaccination, ensure proper wound care, and be mindful of feed supplement practices to reduce the risk of Clostridium outbreaks.

**LETSEMA:** What key takeaways would you like farmers to remember about Clostridium's impact on livestock health?

**Dr Kgothatso Sehoole:** Clostridium diseases can cause significant economic losses due to their rapid onset and high mortality rates. Prevention is far better than cure, and vaccination is the most effective tool in preventing these deadly outbreaks.

By implementing these strategies and working closely with veterinarians, farmers can protect their livestock from Clostridium-related diseases and ensure the health and productivity of their herds.



# ABATTOIR

## ESTABLISHMENT PROCESS IN THE NORTH WEST PROVINCE

Article compiled by:  
Boitumelo Montoedi & Rachel Dlamini

1. The client approaches the local Veterinary Public Health officer (VPHO) of the area and indicate their intention to operate an abattoir.
2. Advice will be given and abattoir guidelines regarding the relevant legislation will be provided to the prospect abattoir owner
3. Application form for abattoir establishment will be provided to the prospect abattoir owner and is to be completed and submitted back to the local VPHO of the area with the following documents attached; -
  - a) Letter of consent from the local municipality/Letter of no objection from tribal authority
  - b) Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) report approved by the Environmental Affairs
  - c) Letter of approval from the Provincial Department of Water Affairs
  - d) Architectural designed drawings of the intended structures for evaluation and approval
  - e) Proof of payment for evaluation of the designed drawings
4. The evaluation process includes visits to the intended site and approval by the Provincial Executive officer(PEO) is based on the compliance of the designed drawings according to the Meat Safety Act, 40 of 2000 and its regulations
5. Concurrent to construction of an abattoir, the owner must make arrangements to train his workers on slaughter techniques, designing the Hygiene Management System, procure meat inspection services from an approved list of service providers in the province and outsource companies to use for pest control, cleaning chemicals, laboratory services etc.
6. Continuous monitoring will be conducted during construction of the abattoir by the local Veterinary Public Health officer of the area will be monitored with assistance of the regional Assistant Director.
7. A trial slaughter will be arranged after completion of building the slaughter facility, to test the capacity to handle required number of units. The slaughterers and the meat inspection personnel must be available during the trial slaughter.
8. When the facility is approved after the trial slaughter, the VPHO will make recommendation to PEO for the registration of the abattoir. The application form accompanied by the prescribed application fee must be submitted whereby the abattoir registration certificate with the unique number will be issued.
9. The registration of an abattoir is valid for a period of a year.

### REFERENCE DOCUMENT

Meat Safety Act, 40 of 2000 as well as Regulations

Compiled by: Ms Boitumelo Montoedi & Ms Rachel Dlamini





Head of Department Thupi Mokhatla with the newly elected committee of the North West Women in Agriculture and Rural Development (WARD) Structure.

The Department has launched the Women in Agriculture and Rural Development Structure, (WARD)

By Kgalalelo Mashomo

The North West Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD) has reaffirmed its commitment to fostering gender equity and leadership in agriculture with the launch of the Women in Agriculture and Rural Development (WARD) Structure. The unveiling ceremony took place on November 8 in Klerksdorp, marking a significant milestone in empowering women to lead in agricultural innovation and rural development.

The WARD Structure is a transformative initiative designed to amplify the representation and participation of women in agriculture. It aims to address critical barriers faced by women in the sector, including access to land, financing, and markets. By providing training, skills development, and resources, WARD seeks to equip women with the tools needed to overcome these challenges.

Beyond resource allocation, WARD prioritizes building strong networks to foster collaboration and knowledge sharing among women in agriculture. The initiative also encourages women to step into leadership roles, enhancing food security and driving rural economic empowerment.

Speaking at the event, the Head of Department, Mr. Thupi Mokhatla, highlighted the broader impact of the initiative:

"Empowering women, particularly in rural areas, accelerates community-led development projects centered on agricultural innovation, sustainable livelihoods, and food security. Women are key drivers of change in our efforts to build resilient communities."

Neo Mohlamme, a farmer and the newly elected Chairperson of the WARD Structure, expressed her enthusiasm for the program's potential to transform the sector. "This initiative ensures women are not only beneficiaries but also leaders in shaping a more inclusive and sustainable agricultural future," she said.

The launch of WARD aligns seamlessly with the department's strategic priorities, showcasing a commitment to unlocking the full potential of women in agriculture. By valuing women's contributions to sustainable development and enhancing their participation, DARD is paving the way for an inclusive and progressive agricultural sector in the North West Province.



Farmer and Chairperson of the North West Women in Agriculture and Rural Development (WARD) Structure, Neo Mohlamme.



# Protect Your Herd, Ensure Their Health!

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Let's move North West together

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**Let's Grow North West Together**