



MEDIA STATEMENT

Att : ALL EDITORS

Media Houses

Date: Thursday, 12 October 2023

UPDATE ON THE AVIAN INFLUENZA OUTBREAK IN THE NORTH-WEST PROVINCE

Mahikeng - An increase in the number of Avian Influenza outbreaks has been recorded in Bojanala District from four (4) to ten (10) chicken houses and the spread is currently confined to layer farms to date. The 10 000-layer unit which was affected since the outbreak, saw a drastic drop in egg production and has increased biosecurity by managing each unit as an independent house. The farm has been served with a quarantine notice. An additional farm in Bojanala was reported to the Department yesterday, 11 October 2023. The export certificates that were previously issued for this farm by the Veterinary Services Directorate have since been revoked.

“The department requests all farmers to apply for exemption to slaughter should they be unable to meet the required biosecurity measures. Some farms who had an outbreak progressed immediately to culling and have already started making plans to disinfect. This process will help to resolve the outbreak much faster and prepare for resumption of business as soon as possible. Farms that decided to postpone culling because birds have stopped dying will remain under quarantine as they cannot prove freedom from the disease,” explained Veterinary Services Director, Dr Langa Madyibi.

Dr Madyibi further advised that farmers who have visited infected farms and have a large stock of eggs in the store have an option of selling the eggs to approved disinfecting houses. In that manner, they can maintain their businesses as the eggs will be disinfected and processed.

Department of Agriculture and Rural Development MEC Desbo Mohono says currently South Africa does not allow vaccination for Avian Influenza and the only solution that is provided in the case of an outbreak is culling of the birds and disinfection. "Vaccines available in the international market should be registered and approved by medicines registering authorities in South Africa to be used in the country. A protocol for the use of vaccines by any farm has been drawn and made available to farmers. The first requirement for any facility or farm to be approved to vaccinate for Avian Influenza is that they should be registered as a ZA facility with DALRRD which requires them to attain strict biosecurity standards," MEC clarified.

Issuing of Veterinary Health Certificates has affected the export of eggs and live chickens to prevent further spreading of the virus to other countries. Farmers who were previously not registered as South African facilities should consider going through the process that would qualify them to be approved for vaccination. These farmers are assisted by State Veterinarians.

Farmers are strongly advised to adhere to strict biosecurity measures which include preventing wild birds from coming into contact with domesticated chickens. Meat and eggs from infected farms and dead chickens should not be used for human or predator animal consumption.

For more information contact Dr Langa Madyibi: Veterinary Services Director in the North West Province on 066 190 9190

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Issued by the Communication Services Directorate

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