

Media Statement

4 December 2019

JOINT STATEMENT OF THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, LAND REFORM AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT AND THE FMD TECHNICAL TASK TEAM ON THE FOOT-AND-MOUTH DISEASE OUTBREAK LIMPOPO

Progress has been reported consistently over the past four weeks since the outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease (FMD) in Molemole. To date, 11 commercial properties have been found to be infected and confirmed positive: Seven in Capricorn, two in Vhembe and two in Mopani district municipalities. There are an estimated 14 000 cattle on the infected properties, which include five feedlots and six commercial breeding farms. All affected properties have been linked directly or indirectly to cattle sold at auctions. Further follow-up investigation and sampling is still being conducted to determine the extent of the outbreak.

The Minister of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development gazetted a national ban on the gathering of cloven-hoofed animals, including livestock auctions, shows and similar activities. The gazette is available on the DAFF website <https://www.daff.gov.za/daffweb3/Home/Foot-and-mouth>

According to Section 11 of the Animal Diseases Act, 1984 (Act No. 35) it is the responsibility of "any owner or manager of land on which there are animals to take all reasonable steps to prevent the infection of the animals with any animal disease, or parasite and the spreading thereof from the relevant land or animals".

Anyone spreading FMD through the movement of animals may, therefore, be held civilly and or criminally liable for such an offence.

All suspected and infected properties have been placed under quarantine and no livestock is allowed to move in, through or out of the affected properties. Immediate neighbouring properties have also been placed under quarantine. Quarantine on the suspected and neighbouring properties will be lifted as soon as it has been proven that all animals on these properties are free of FMD. The owners of infected properties have been given slaughter out options to facilitate depopulation.

As per the press release of 19 November 2019, all owners of livestock are encouraged to observe strict biosecurity measures on their premises. The biosecurity guidelines are available on the National Animal Health Forum website www.nahf.co.za.

It is important that all livestock owners familiarise themselves with the following measures to prevent their animals from being infected:

- Not moving high risk animals;
- Only buying animals from a proven source;
- Insisting on a veterinary attestation/health declaration to accompany any animals that are brought in.

Adherence to the above measures will assist government and farmers to resolve the situation. It is vital that all stakeholders act reasonably, responsibly and according to the law at all times.

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