



# agriculture

Department:  
Agriculture  
**REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

## OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL

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**Media release**  
**Immediate release**

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### **Foot and Mouth Disease outbreak confirmed in Mpumalanga**

The Minister is highly concerned about the ongoing Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) outbreaks in KwaZulu-Natal and the recent spread to Mpumalanga and Gauteng.

Two new cases, outside of KZN have been confirmed. One farm in Mpumalanga which was identified as part of trace-forward exercises from a positive auction in Utrecht, KwaZulu Natal. Although these animals showed no clinical signs of disease, further investigation have confirmed that the virus has spread to adjacent camps on the same farm. There are no indications that other farms have become infected, but veterinary services are continuing with clinical inspection and testing of livestock on farms in the area.

Another farm was reported in Gauteng. Clinical signs suspicious of FMD were noted in a feedlot that received animals from an auction in Heidelberg, samples were collected and prioritised for testing. Laboratory results for these samples are positive and confirmed that this is the same virus that is circulating in parts of KwaZulu-Natal. An epidemiological investigation is underway to trace back and trace forward all other animals that were bought and sold at the same auction.

### **Trade suspension imposed by the People's Republic of China**

As a result of the spread of the KZN outbreaks to Mpumalanga and Gauteng, the People's Republic of China has suspended imports of cloven hoofed animals and related products. Preliminary information obtained confirmed that this suspension includes only beef from the whole of South Africa to China.

### **Actions taken by the Department of Agriculture**

Minister Steenhuisen has escalated control efforts to the Deputy Director-General's office due to the seriousness of the matter. The office of the DDG has already held meetings with Veterinary Services and industry representatives to detail the actions required to curb this threat. The biosecurity, traceability and record keeping of animals bought and sold at auctions and similar industries were raised as a specific concern.



## Caution to buyers and sellers of livestock

Livestock owners in the country should take note of the incubation period of FMD. This is a period of 2 to 14 days, within which animals can appear clinically healthy, before they start showing clinical signs generally associated with FMD. This highlights the importance of keeping newly bought animals separated from the resident herd for at least 28 days, even if a health attestation was issued for the animals. The health attestation and 28-day separation have been a legal requirement since October 2022.

## Biosecurity and awareness in the whole country

The department urges all livestock farmers in the whole country to limit animal movement as far as possible. We request auctioneers and livestock owners to be vigilant when buying cloven hoofed animals from provinces where there are active FMD outbreaks. No cloven-hoofed animals should be accepted from areas under restriction for FMD in KwaZulu-Natal, Eastern Cape, Limpopo, and Mpumalanga.

Section 11 of the Animal Diseases Act 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.

Essential biosecurity measures include limiting and/or postponing the introduction of new animals if at all possible and, if absolutely necessary, only introducing animals from known clean farms with a health declaration, preventing nose-to-nose contact of farm animals with animals outside the farm, maintaining secure farm boundaries, restricting access for people and vehicles as much as possible.

FMD is a controlled animal disease in terms of the Animal Diseases Act, 1984 (Act No 35 of 1984). Any suspicious clinical symptoms (salivation, blisters in the mouth, limping or hoof lesions) must be reported to the local State Veterinarian immediately and such animals must not be moved under any circumstances. The Act prescribes certain control measures, like isolation and movement control, that are being enforced by Veterinary Services.

**-END-**

### For further enquiries contact:

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**ISSUED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE**



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