

Status report: FMD outbreak

The foot and mouth disease (FMD) outbreak reported at the beginning of the year dismayed those in the red meat sector. On 7 January the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (DAFF) reported and confirmed an outbreak of FMD in the high surveillance area of the FMD-free zone, adjacent to the protection zone, in Limpopo. Subsequently, South Africa lost its World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) recognised FMD-free without vaccination status.



Image via [AgriOrbit](#)

Status of the outbreak

Since the last positive case was reported on 4 February, five weeks ago, there have been no new clinical cases of FMD or serologically positive test results in the epidemiological groups surveyed. Roughly 13,500 cattle across 27 diptanks have been vaccinated, and identified as vaccinated, in the former FMD-free area since 14 January.

Foot and mouth disease-free zone

Valuable information has been gathered from more than 400 local livestock owners, in 16 rural villages, interviewed during February. The department is assessing the information to strategise a way forward so that South Africa can regain its international FMD-free status. Revised measures and practices, taking timelines and available resources into account, will now be considered.

The department appreciates the technical advice it has received from world-renowned experts, and the practical guidance it has had from the private sector, which will inform the action plans.

Open for trade

Priority has been given to the continuation of trade in safe commodities. The department successfully negotiated the revision of veterinary health certificates for beef to Bahrain, Egypt, Jordan, Kuwait, Lesotho, Mozambique, Qatar, Swaziland and the United Arab Emirates. Trade in pork from FMD-free pig compartments has been re-opened to Lesotho, Mozambique, Namibia (partially), Seychelles and Swaziland. Trade negotiations with Namibia (for beef) and Botswana (for pork) are still underway.

The markets for dairy products have largely been restored. Some markets for the export of hides, skins and wool are still

affected and robust negotiations are underway, particularly for products that have been processed to ensure the destruction of the FMD virus.

Report from China

Minister Senzeni Zokwana met the Chinese ambassador to discuss the continuation of trade and acceptance of South Africa's safe commodities. Stricter proceedings to ensure necessary assurance for future trading have been affirmed.

Safe commodities

The department considers commodities that have been processed to inactivate the FMD virus, according to the internationally accepted requirements of the OIE Terrestrial Animal Health Code, as safe. The full list of these commodities is available on request.

However, importing countries retain the right to determine their own appropriate level of protection, and it should not be assumed that export markets for safe commodities are automatically open.

As true South Africans, encouraged by President Ramaphosa's Thuma mina campaign, state and private veterinary teams, organised industry and law enforcement officers rolled up their sleeves and put their backs into ensuring the smooth running, and successful outcome, of the disease control campaign.

For this, the department extends its heartfelt appreciation and gratitude.

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