

PRESS RELEASE

(for immediate release)

OUTBREAK OF FOOT AND MOUTH DISEASE IN KWAZULU-NATAL FURTHER SETBACK FOR THE RED MEAT INDUSTRY

The red meat industry has a turnover of more than R80 billion per annum and is often refer to as the sleeping giant in the South African agriculture.

The red meat industry is 40% transformed and has vast potential for inclusive growth. The industry is highly competitive in terms of quality of product and prices are 30% below world norms. The potential to grow beef exports from 5% to 20% of local production is realistic, and to grow the export of live small stock for slaughtering purposes to almost 10% of production.

In order to achieve this, we need a high standard of animal disease status and control. South Africa recently on a permanent basis lost our foot and mouth disease (FMD) free zone status with the international animal health organisation, the OIE and the recent outbreak in KwaZulu-Natal is a further setback. It will take at least five years to regain this status, but in order for exports to grow during these times we must be seen to be making progress on this road containing foot and mouth disease.

It has been clear for a while now that business as usual is not sufficient any more to contain FMD. This was realised by DALRAD, the provincial agricultural departments and industry and they are in a process of holding imbizos in the FMD affected provinces, namely Limpopo, Mpumalanga and KwaZulu-Natal to decide on a way forward.

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From industry's side, the national Animal Health Forum and provincial Animal Health Forums were revamped in order to support government in containing FMD. Industry already indicated its willingness to contribute towards this goal.

The formal red meat industry is in a process of finalising a memorandum of possible solutions that we would like to present to the honorable Minister of Agriculture. This will inter alia include:

- Additional finance from Treasury.
- How to deal with capacity problems.
- Infrastructure needs.
- Market access.

The RPO would like to thank DALRAD and the provincial departments for all their efforts in this regard and we look forward to work more closely together in future.

“Progressing towards containing foot and mouth disease is in national interest”

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