

**Voluntary Report** – Voluntary - Public Distribution

**Date:** June 29, 2021

**Report Number:** SF2021-0040

**Report Name:** Foot and Mouth Disease Outbreak in the KwaZulu-Natal Province

**Country:** South Africa - Republic of

**Post:** Pretoria

**Report Category:** Livestock and Products, Sanitary/Phytosanitary/Food Safety

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**Report Highlights:**

On May 28, 2021, the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development (DALRRD) announced a foot and mouth disease outbreak in the KwaZulu-Natal province. The outbreak was detected in cattle in a communal area, which was part of South Africa's previous FMD-free zone before the OIE suspended this internationally recognized status in 2019. The provincial DALRRD established a task team to control the outbreak and implement measures to contain the spread.

## **Background**

On May 28, 2021, the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development (DALRRD) announced the detection of a Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) outbreak in cattle within Mtubatuba under UMkhanyakude District Municipality in KwaZulu-Natal. Subsequent to the announcement, Botswana and Namibia put restrictions on the import and movement of all red meat products from South Africa.

DALRRD collected samples on May 26 during routine disease surveillance, after provincial veterinary officials noticed cattle showing suspicious lesions at one communal location. The Onderstepoort Veterinary Research Laboratory confirmed this diagnosis on the following date. Viral typing is ongoing to determine the identity of virus involved in this outbreak. A team of officials from the KwaZulu-Natal provincial DALRRD office are conducting further investigations to determine the extent of the outbreak.

DALRRD will determine the appropriate control measures by the findings of the investigation. In an effort to prevent further spread of the disease while the extent of the outbreak is being determined, an immediate temporary standstill of all cloven-hoofed animals, including livestock and game, has been imposed in the District Municipalities of King Cetshwayo and Umkhanyakude, as well as the Local Municipalities of Nongoma, Ulundi and Pongola in the Zululand District Municipality.

The area under standstill will be reviewed within two weeks, based on further disease investigations. The Minister of DALRRD has established an FMD Task Team to prioritize all matters related to this outbreak, and a Veterinary Operational Committee is dealing with the outbreak at a provincial level.

The World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) previously recognized South Africa as having an FMD-free zone where vaccination is not practiced; however, South Africa lost that status in 2019. The latest outbreak in KwaZulu-Natal occurred in the former FMD-free zone.

## **Exports of South Africa's Red Meat Products Restricted**

Subsequent to the announcement of the outbreak by DALRRD, Botswana and Namibia restricted the import and movement of all red meat products from South Africa. South Africa lost its FMD-free zone status with the OIE in January 2019 after an outbreak in the FMD-free zone of Limpopo. According to the South African Red Meat Producers Organization, the KwaZulu-Natal outbreak has caused a further setback, and it will take another five years for South Africa to regain the FMD-free zone status.

## **Biosecurity Strengthening Plans by the South African Government**

During her 2021/2022 budget speech, the Minister of DALRRD reported that cabinet has approved the Phytosanitary Bill and the Agricultural Products Standards Amendment Bill for tabling in Parliament. The bills are critical in strengthening the regulatory environment within the agricultural sector.

Furthermore, the South African Agricultural Research Council has now approved an implementation plan for the design, construction and commissioning of a new Foot and Mouth Disease Vaccine production facility. Upon completion, this facility will provide the country with an important tool to combat the outbreak of the FMD disease and accelerate livestock production for adequate market access and trade.



**Attachments:**

No Attachments.