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GAIN Report

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FMD Outbreak Leads to Bans on Imports of Red Meat from South Africa

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Report Highlights:

The January 2019 outbreak of foot and mouth disease in South Africa led to several countries, including China, Botswana, Mozambique, Namibia, eSwatini, Zambia and Zimbabwe, suspending imports of cloven-hoofed animals and their products from South Africa. In 2018, South Africa exported live cattle and red meat valued at about \$90 million to these countries, accounting for about 46 percent of South Africa's total live cattle and red meat exports. To lessen the impact of these trade bans on an industry that is currently recovering from drought and the 2017/2018 listeria outbreak, South Africa is engaging with its trade partners to relax the trade restrictions and negotiating new health certificates where necessary. South Africa does not export live animals and red meat to the United States. Although South Africa is not a large market for U.S. red meat, the United States exported 15,700 tons of red meat to South Africa in 2018.

Background

On January 8, 2019, the South African Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (DAFF) released a [notification](#) of a foot and mouth disease (FMD) outbreak in cattle in the Vhembe District of Limpopo in the Northeast section of the country. DAFF reported the outbreak to the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE), resulting in the temporary suspension of South Africa's OIE recognized FMD-free status. Currently, South Africa is unable to certify any exports where FMD free zone attestation is required. This led to China, [Botswana](#), [Mozambique](#), [Namibia](#), eSwatini, Zambia and [Zimbabwe](#) suspending imports of livestock and red meat from South Africa.

To protect its multi-billion Rand red meat industry against the spread of the disease and to safeguard, DAFF has put the affected area under quarantine, restricting the movement of animals and animal products in that region. On January 14, 2019, [DAFF](#) reported that the outbreak had affected only 50 cattle in an area with 10,000 to 15,000 cattle. As of February 15, 2019, DAFF had notified the OIE of five positive locations, which are all in close proximity in Limpopo Province. Vaccination is currently underway to prevent further infections. A group of experts is monitoring the situation and implementing control measures to restore South Africa's FMD-free status.

South Africa's Red Meat Exports

In global terms, South Africa is not a major exporter of red meat, with exports accounting for about 5 percent of its red meat production (see, [South African Beef Imports Expected to Remain Flat in 2018; The South African Pork Market](#)). In 2018, South Africa exported 47,150 tons of red meat (fresh, chilled or frozen) valued \$178.1 million. During the same period, South Africa exported 36,760 live cattle, valued \$26.7 million. The countries that suspended cloven-hoofed animal and animal product imports from South Africa accounted for about 54 percent of South Africa's red meat exports in volume terms in 2018 (Table 1). The same countries accounted for about 27 percent of South Africa's live cattle exports during the same period. Overall, South Africa exported live cattle and red meat valued about \$90 million to these countries in 2018.

South Africa's Efforts to Regain Access to Temporarily Closed Markets is Paying Off

To lessen the impact of these trade bans on an industry that is currently recovering from drought and the 2017/2018 listeria outbreak, South Africa is engaging with its trade partners to relax the trade restrictions and negotiate new health certificates where necessary. In addition, South Africa has been reassuring its trade partners about the safety of its meat products, particularly those which do not pose a risk of transmitting FMD, such as "[as heat treated meat and dairy products, deboned and matured beef, scoured wool, salted hides and skins, and livestock embryos](#)". On February 27, 2019, DAFF [reported](#) that it had successfully negotiated revised veterinary health certificates for beef exports to Bahrain, Jordan, Qatar, Kuwait and eSwatini. These five countries accounted for about 27 percent of South Africa's total red meat exports in value terms in 2018. China, the largest importer of red meat from South Africa in 2018, is currently undertaking a risk assessment of the FMD situation in South Africa to determine if it is safe to reopen the market for South African red meat products. Meanwhile, South Africa is currently negotiating revised veterinary health certificates for beef with Egypt, Namibia, Mozambique and Lesotho. If successful, such initiatives by South Africa will lessen the impact of the FMD outbreak on the local red meat industry, and reopen the valuable markets.

Table 1: South Africa's Red Meat Exports

Partner Country	2016	2017	2018
	tons		
Lesotho	6,232	7,361	6,199
Mozambique	7,330	5,992	6,489
Namibia	4,132	4,613	4,657
United Arab Emirates	4,260	4,406	2,496
Swaziland	3,888	4,045	3,809
Hong Kong	3,331	3,721	1,130
Kuwait	4,371	3,268	3,487
Jordan	3,892	2,551	1,82
Vietnam	6,410	2,507	1,318
Botswana	2,369	2,392	2,321
China	2	2,025	7,528
Angola	1,553	1,249	857
Other Countries	9,144	6,556	5,030
Total	56,914	50,686	47,143

Source: GTA