



KWAZULU-NATAL PROVINCE

AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

AMAZULU KING MISUZULU KAZWELITHINI THROWS HIS WEIGHT BEHIND AGRICULTURE DEPARTMENT'S EFFORTS TO CONTROL FMD

The Amazulu King Misuzulu kaZwelithini and the KwaZulu-Natal MEC for Agriculture and Rural Development, Hon Thembeni kaMadlopha-Mthethwa met on 14 November 2025 to discuss, amongst other matters, the spread of Foot-and-Mouth Disease (FMD) outbreaks to all but one district, rural development and the facilitation of access to land for rural women to address food insecurity. The high-level meeting comprising of Department officials and the King's delegation, was held at eMashobeni Royal Palace in Pongola. It occurred at a time when FMD cases are escalating in the province, with the SAT 2 FMD virus prevalent in most cases.

The King expressed satisfaction with the Department's management of disease-related challenges, while emphasizing the need for increased efforts in vaccinations, awareness campaigns and stricter restriction measures regarding animal movement from declared Disease Management Areas.

The King has also pledged to encourage the public to engage in agricultural activities to address food insecurity and to support the Department's efforts in preventing the illegal movement of animals from infected zones. "FMD is spreading more particularly in communal areas along game reserves. In supporting efforts to curb this, no one should move animals from FMD declared areas without a permit. This includes those exchanging cattle as part of dowry. Let us work together in this. I commit my institution, including traditional leaders, to work together with Departmental officials."

Drawing from the King's wisdom, kaMadlopha-Mthethwa has also committed her Department to collaborating closely with the King, particularly in encouraging communities to engage in agricultural activities. "The King has demonstrated exemplary leadership by quarantining his cattle for 28 days and we salute him for championing our call for this quarantine, as any cattle introduced to a farm must be kept separate from resident herds for at least 28 days. We will also intensify our efforts to ensure agricultural projects and cooperatives thrive by providing production inputs, fencing and other agricultural-related activities.

We are encouraged by the King's wise words to serve all the people by ensuring service delivery is seen and felt in every corner of the province. Agriculture is the backbone of our economy in the province. It results in job creation and addressing food insecurity. Research shows that about 17 percent of households from Zululand, uMkhanyakude and uMzinyathi experience food insecurity and as a result, our budget prioritises service distribution in these districts."

The Department assures livestock farmers, owners and the general public that it is working round the clock to mitigate the impact of the disease affecting most districts in the province. The rising

cases of the FMD event are not limited to KwaZulu-Natal, as several other provinces are currently grappling with the disease affecting communal, commercial feedlots and dairy farms.

It's against this backdrop that the Department led by Ms Thembeni kaMadlopha-Mthethwa recently convened a Consultative Indaba on FMD comprising of industry experts in Durban, private and state veterinary technicians and livestock associations to find a lasting solution to the problem.

The Department is currently implementing the Indaba's resolutions, which include:

1. Encouraging farmers, speculators, auctioneers and citizens to adhere to livestock movement restrictions and utilise movement permits when moving animals from the disease management area (DMA).
2. Calling upon the Agricultural Research Council-OVI to share circulating FMD strains with vaccine manufacturers.
3. Expediting efforts to authorize Allerton Provincial Veterinary Laboratory as a second FMD diagnostic laboratory.
4. Calling upon the National Department of Agriculture to urgently provide adequate FMD vaccine and ensure prophylactic vaccination of livestock in the province.
5. Continue with assisting with market access to farmers, especially previously disadvantaged farmers in the Disease Management Area.

The Department has deployed Veterinarians across the province, who are currently working on the ground by assisting affected farmers and raising awareness about the disease.

Since the FMD re-emerged in 2021, approximately 800 000 cattle have been vaccinated and of these, 324 700 were vaccinated both in and out the DMA this year alone. Below is a list of vaccinated cloven-hoofed animals in districts where vaccinations were carried out;

uMkhanyakude District; 57 261 (vaccinations)

Zululand District; 39 041

Amajuba; 107 759

uThukela; 24 550

King Cetshwayo; 9 671

Umzinyathi; 28 325

uMgungundlovu; 37 000

Harry Gwala; 21 235

With specific reference to Zululand, vaccinations are as follows;

Nongoma; 15 123 (July to August)

Abaqulusi; 9 867

Ulundi; 10 424 (April to July)

Edumbe; 3 627

Pongola; 00

All districts except for UGU have suspected or confirmed FMD cases;

As noted during the recent Indaba on FMD in Durban, the impact is exacerbated by the illegal movement of cattle from the Disease Management Area or infected zones despite stringent animal movement measures in place by the government. Adherence to established animal movement restrictions and rules is everyone's responsibility. The Department calls upon farmers to adhere to biosecurity measures to support containment efforts in eradication of the disease.











