



## **MEDIA STATEMENT**

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### **KWAZULU-NATAL AGRICULTURE MEC KAMADLOPA-MTHETHWA BOOSTS COMMUNAL LIVESTOCK FARMERS WITH MUCH-NEEDED DIPPING CHEMICALS AND CALLS ON FARMERS TO ROUTINELY DIP THEIR CATTLE TO PREVENT TICK-BORNE DISEASES AND FMD**

KwaZulu-Natal communal livestock farmers have received a shot in the arm following the provision of much-needed dipping chemicals that have been made adequately available to help prevent tick-borne diseases. The most-sought after chemical acaricides applied on cattle would be distributed to all 11 districts in KwaZulu-Natal. The handing over of thousands of dipping chemicals was officiated by KwaZulu-Natal MEC for Agriculture and Rural Development Thembeni Madlopha-Mthethwa at the ceremony held at Dondotha, in uMfolozi on the KwaZulu-Natal north coast. These measures are designed to enhance primary animal health, animal productivity, and animal husbandry. Dipping remains one of the most effective ways of preventing ticks and tick-borne diseases.

In the last year alone, communal farmers in the province suffered the loss of approximately 60 thousand cows, which died of tick-borne diseases. A lack of adherence to cattle dipping routines or shortage of chemical acaricides was suspected of being the main cause. MEC KaMadlopha-Mthethwa said she believes that the provision and distribution of dipping chemical acaricides to all districts of the province would help ease tick-borne diseases affecting cattle, which is a major source of economic empowerment for rural communities and farmers.

Furthermore, three of KwaZulu-Natal districts - Zululand, King Cetshwayo and uMkhanyakude - are still under restriction due to a Foot-and-Mouth Disease, which is forcing farmers not to trade their livestock beyond their districts due to movement control measures applied on affected Diptanks. In the fight to contain the spread of Foot-and-Mouth (FMD), KaMadlopha-Mthethwa has advised farmers within the three districts to contact the Department in case they wish to move their animals and be guided accordingly, "The control measures are still in place and the clinical surveillance is still underway to ensure early detection of FMD. We are conducting vaccinations across the province to ensure that animals are free from any tick-borne disease. In KwaZulu-Natal, the challenge is exacerbated and complicated by the FMD carrier status of buffalo populations in some game reserves in close proximity to communal livestock and borderline areas. FMD is a cause for concern as it has a negative impact on red meat production and its export prospects."

Livestock interventions by government entail primary animal health care, dipping activities, vaccinations against zoonotic (brucellosis and anthrax), and economical (FMD) diseases. KwaZulu-Natal province is overwhelmed with such diseases, and



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MEC KaMadlopha-Mthethwa has urged all livestock owners to participate and cooperate in the government efforts to eradicate and control these diseases through;

- (a) Dipping against tick-borne diseases
- (b) Presenting animals for veterinary regulatory interventions (inspections, vaccinations, branding, etc.).

According to the Communal Livestock Census, diptank committees have an estimate of three million beef cattle with 2 207 dipping tanks.

During the launch, attendees, including the MEC, also observed the World Rabies Day. An intensive vaccination campaign by the Department of Agriculture is underway in most districts. MEC Thembeni KaMadlopha-Mthethwa has called on all pet owners to ensure that all cats and dogs are vaccinated against rabies, which is a dread disease causing human fatalities when bitten or attacked by rabid dogs. There have been records of 11 positive dogs in King Cetshwayo District to date. KaMadlopha-Mthethwa also used this platform to lament the attack of state veterinarians who are being hijacked of their vehicles, mugged of their belongings, and state property when administering vaccinations. Such incidents are more common in King Cetshwayo, uMgungundlovu, and eThekweni.

\*Issued by the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Agriculture and Rural Development