



KWAZULU-NATAL PROVINCE
AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

MEDIA STATEMENT

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KZN CABINET WELCOMES NATIONAL FMD VACCINATION STRATEGY, ANNOUNCES PROVINCE-WIDE ROLLOUT FROM FEBRUARY

The KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Premier, Honourable Thamsanqa Ntuli and the Cabinet, have acknowledged the challenges posed by the Foot-and-Mouth Disease outbreak in the province, while also appreciating the efforts of the MEC for Agriculture and Rural Development, Honourable Thembeni kaMadlopha-Mthethwa, in combating the spread.

The Cabinet meeting was held at the Moses Mabhida Building in the provincial capital. This follows reports from the Department showing that the disease has spread to all districts within the province, with recent incidents reported in Ugu and Harry Gwala districts.

Cabinet will shortly announce interventions to strengthen the FMD vaccination drive, complementing the National Department's mass vaccination strategy, which will make vaccines accessible starting February. The vaccines will be received in phases and will cover approximately 80 to 90 percent of the total cattle population in KwaZulu-Natal.

The National Department's 10-year strategic vaccination plan is aimed at eradicating FMD nationally and comes at a critical time for KwaZulu-Natal, which has unfortunately become the epicentre of the outbreak. To date, a total of 207 FMD outbreaks have been recorded in the province, placing KwaZulu-Natal in a high-risk category and posing a serious threat to the livestock industry, the livestock export market and food security.

The MEC emphasised that vaccination remains a critical tool in containing the current outbreak and protecting the province's livestock sector. Since the first outbreak was recorded in Mtubatuba in May 2021, the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (KZN DARD) has implemented extensive control measures and has vaccinated approximately 800 000 cattle to date.

"Our Veterinarians are actively on the ground working closely with farmers to manage and contain this disease. The demand for FMD vaccines is extremely high and farmers have experienced challenges in accessing vaccines. As provincial government, we are pleased to announce that a province-wide vaccination rollout will commence in February," said MEC kaMadlopha-Mthethwa.

She added that the rollout plan will cover feedlots, dairy farms, commercial farms and communal farming areas, with further details on dates and locations to be communicated in due course. KwaZulu-Natal will be the starting point of the national livestock vaccination programme and all livestock owners are urged to cooperate fully with Veterinary officials when the campaign begins next month.

Despite the scale of the outbreak, KZN DARD initially managed to contain FMD to the northern parts of the province through the implementation of four key control measures: surveillance (both diagnostic and clinical), movement control, vaccination and community engagement and extension services.

Surveillance has been successfully implemented, with Veterinary Services using Global Positioning System (GPS) technology to accurately track positive cases. As of December 2025, more than 19 000 animals had been sampled and tested across the province.

The Department has also prioritised stakeholder engagement to strengthen the response to FMD.

A major milestone was the successful FMD Consultative Indaba held in Durban in October last year, which brought together key role players in the livestock industry, including the Milk Producers Organisation, Milk SA, pharmaceutical companies, state-owned entities, universities, livestock associations, the Red Meat Industry Organisation, SAPO and private sector partners. Resolutions from the Indaba are currently being implemented and monitored.

KZN DARD continues to work closely with industry stakeholders, including the Meat Producers Organisation, through technical forums aimed at sharing information and coordinating interventions to control the disease.

The MEC further announced that provincial leadership, led by the Premier of KwaZulu-Natal together with Members of the Executive Council, will spearhead a public awareness campaign to educate communities about Foot-and-Mouth Disease and the importance of complying with control measures. Details of the awareness campaign, including dates and locations, will be communicated to the public in due course.

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