



KZN FMD vaccination drive reaches 1.7 million cattle

21 August 2026

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KwaZulu-Natal has vaccinated 1.7 million cattle against foot-and-mouth disease (FMD) as the province pushes ahead with efforts to contain the disease across its livestock sector.

By Maile Matsimela, digital editor at African Farming.

The vaccinations represent more than two-thirds of the province's estimated 2.5 million cattle and have so far been carried out across nine districts. The remaining two districts, uMzinyathi and Amajuba, are expected to be covered in the coming weeks as the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Agriculture and Rural Development works to complete the first phase of its provincial vaccination campaign.

Enemy number one

MEC for Agriculture and Rural Development Thembeni kaMadlopha-Mthethwa described FMD as “enemy number one” for the province's livestock sector, warning that despite progress with vaccination, the fight against the disease was far from over.

Speaking to more than 1 500 farmers and community members at a stakeholder engagement on animal husbandry and food security at eMachibini Sports Field in Mtubatuba, uMkhanyakude District, MEC kaMadlopha-Mthethwa said the disease posed a serious threat to farmers and the wider agricultural economy.



“FMD is enemy number one. It threatens our food security, our markets and the dignity of our farmers. A healthy cow is school fees, it is lobola, it is insurance. We will not allow this disease to destroy what our people have built,” she said.



KwaZulu-Natal Agriculture and Rural Development MEC Thembeni kaMadlopha-Mthethwa addresses farmers during the stakeholder engagement in Mtubatuba. Photo: Supplied

uMzinyathi vaccination drive next

Veterinary teams are expected to resume vaccination operations in uMzinyathi District on Friday, 21 August, where an estimated 285 000 cattle are targeted for vaccination. Amajuba will also be covered as the department moves towards completing the first phase of the campaign.

MEC kaMadlopha-Mthethwa called on livestock owners in the two remaining districts to cooperate with veterinary officials and ensure their cattle are presented when vaccination teams arrive.

She also commended veterinary teams, traditional leaders and farmers for their cooperation with vaccination, dipping, livestock movement controls and the reporting of suspected FMD cases.

The MEC stressed that vaccination alone would not bring the outbreak under control and that continued cooperation with animal-health measures remained critical.

“We are slowly winning this war, but the war is not over until every last animal is protected. Government is with you, and together we will ensure that our cattle are fat, our fields are green and our tables are full,” MEC kaMadlopha-Mthethwa said.