



AGRICULTURE MEC PRAISES EAR TAGGING AS A GAME CHANGER TO ADDRESS TRIPPLE CHALLENGES AFFECTING THE LIVESTOCK INDUSTRY

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The MEC for the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development in KwaZulu-Natal, Mrs. Thembeni kaMadlopha-Mthethwa, has hailed the ear tagging of cloven-hoofed animals as a game changer, saying the technological advancements and measures implemented by officials will address the triple challenges in the sector. Veterinary-led teams are vaccinating cattle and fitting them with distinctive tags showing vaccinated status of the animals, thereby addressing corridor diseases and livestock theft.

The Mpempe Diptank situated at Mngqobokazi in Hluhluwe, visited by the MEC saw 1400 cattle vaccinated. Yesterday alone, the areas within the Inkosi Mtubatuba and Big 5 Hlabida local municipalities witnessed a total of 14 412 animals inoculated and ear tagged.

MEC kaMadlopha-Mthethwa joined twenty vaccination teams on a drive in areas under the Big 5 Hlabisa and Inkosi Mtubatuba local municipalities. The areas under these local municipalities have a target of 55 thousand cattle to be vaccinated. The vaccination efforts have been concluded in uMhlabuyalingana, Jozini, and two districts - uGu and Harry Gwala.

KaMadlopha-Mthethwa visited the Mpempe Diptank to assess the progress made since the programme started yesterday. During her visit, she interacted with local livestock farmers to get their views on challenges affecting them and resolve any outstanding issues they are encountering.

Addressing the farmers, she stressed that the ear tagging would effectively address stock theft and corridor diseases in the Mngqobokazi area in Hluhluwe which has battled with these issues due to its proximity to wildlife reserves.

She commended the Livestock Identification and Traceability System (LITS), saying that the system effectively addresses the challenges currently faced by the sector, "The ear tagging system helps with identification of cattle ownership, district of origin, and, in areas closer to game reserves, helps deal with opportunistic corridor diseases and addresses the issue of stock theft in the district. Animals in close proximity to game reserves are branded with green tags, while others are marked with yellow tags," said kaMadlopha-Mthethwa.

The teams are expected to complete vaccinations in the district by April 16, 2026, and will then relocate the Zululand District by April 20, 2026.

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ISSUED BY THE KWAZULU-NATAL DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT.