



agriculture & rural development

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MEDIA ALERT

UPPING THE GAME IN THE FIGHT AGAINST FOOT AND MOUTH DISEASE (FMD) – CRITICAL FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH IN SOUTH AFRICA: THREE SPHERES OF GOVERNMENT COME TOGETHER IN KZN TO DRIVE THE MESSAGE HOME

On Thursday 15 January 2015, there will be an Imbizo in Bhambanana in the Umkhanyakude District that will be attended by KZN MEC for Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD) Cyril Xaba as well as Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (DAFF) Minister, Senzeni Zokwana and Deputy Minister General Bheki Cele. They will be accompanied by Umkhanyakude District leadership and officials from both Provincial and National Government. The aim of the Imbizo is to drive the message home to the local communities that they hold the key to helping South Africa maintain the lifting of the ban of red meat exports.

Similar Imbizos' will be held with communities that also live near Game Parks in the Limpopo and Mpumalanga Provinces. African Buffalos in the game parks are permanent carriers of the disease making livestock in the surrounding areas vulnerable to the highly contagious disease.

The outbreak of FMD in the Umkhanyakude District in 2011 resulted in the ban of the export of red meat and other livestock products from South Africa. The country suffered a loss of R4 billion a year until February 2014 when the ban was lifted. However, the country is not quite out of the woods as yet. The World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) which monitors norms and standards for the export of red meat and livestock products, will be reviewing the situation in their meeting in February. The OIE sent a team of experts to visit the FMD prone areas in South Africa from 30 November to 6 December 2014. The report from the mission team is to be considered at the OIE Scientific Commission for Animal Diseases (SCAD) meeting next month.

The OIE experts during their visit, were encouraged by progress made in implementing control measures in the fight against FMD. They expressed satisfaction with progress made on the red-line fence separating the infected zones near the Ndumo and Tembe Game Parks from the rest of the district. They did however, also express concerns and these included

prioritizing FMD control measures and creating greater awareness around the issues, especially for communities living near the Game Reserves.

The visit to KZN will review the progress on FMD controls and raise awareness on why these controls are critical, as well as talk about FMD operation compliance for 2015.

On Monday 29 December 2014, KZN MEC for Agriculture and Rural Development Mr Cyril Xaba, visited the area to assess progress made to date on implementing controls against FMD and to engage with local communities on the challenges they faced in this regard.

The media is invited to attend the Imbizo which will start at 10 am on Thursday, 15 January 2015 at the Bhambanana Sports Ground in the Jozini Municipality.

For more information and details please Contact the MEC's Speech Writer, Researcher and Media Liaison:

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