



## agriculture & rural development

Department:  
agriculture  
& rural development  
PROVINCE OF KWAZULU-NATAL

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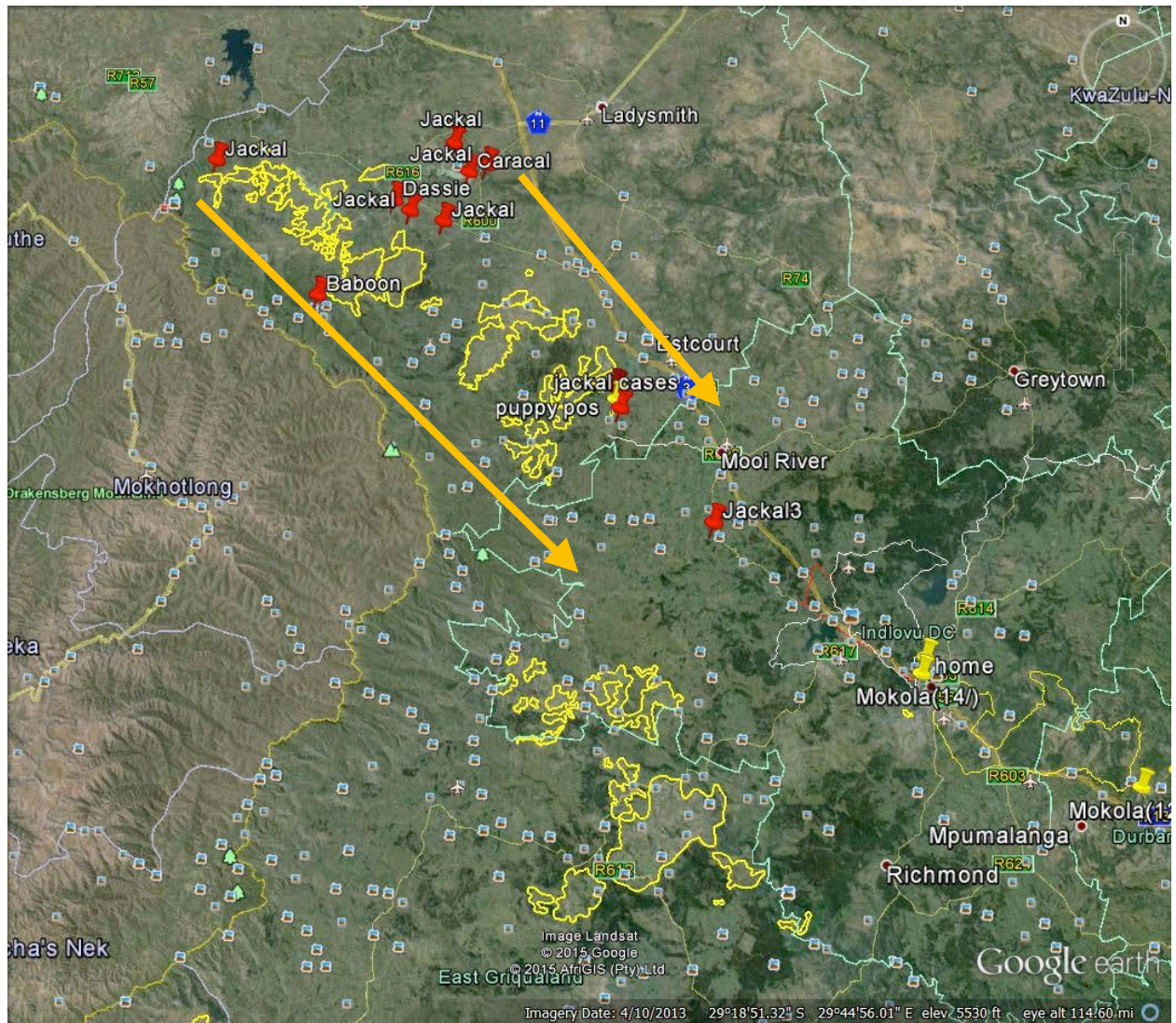
### **KZN MEC FOR AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT MR CYRIL XABA WARNS OF JACKAL RABIES – A NEW THREAT. HE ASSURES THAT THE SITUATION IS UNDER CONTROL AND THE DEPARTMENT’S RABIES VACCINATION CAMPAIGN CONTINUES**

#### **BACKGROUND**

In 2012, there was a serious outbreak of canine rabies in the Okhahlamba (Ladysmith) area. This led to a spill over into the jackal population with a number of other wildlife species becoming victims (Caracal; Baboon; Dassie). Following an intense vaccination campaign amongst the local dog population by the Department, no cases of the virus have been reported since then on the Canine or wildlife population of that area.

However, in January 2015, we have had 3 jackal cases - two in Estcourt near the Wagons Drift Dam and the most recent report is a case near Nottingham Road. This represents a movement of nearly 130km from the original outbreak. As a precaution, we are considering the Midlands as a potentially endemic area for the rabies infected Jackal.

Jackals are a well-suited host of the rabies virus, but normally only when their numbers are sufficiently large and there is a source of rabies to initiate the outbreak.



### **SPREAD (see map)**

Little is known (Scientifically) about the current jackal population. It is however agreed upon by most people, that there has been a significant increase in the population in recent years. Rabies in jackals can be cyclical and is dependent on the jackal population, which fluctuates depending on such factors as disease or drought. There is little that can be done at present to limit the spread of this outbreak amongst these wildlife animals.

Our own experience, however, has taught us that if we vaccinate domestic animals we can control the spread of the disease.

The Province's dog population is currently in a very healthy state, with dog rabies having been reduced from 473 cases in 2007 down to 38 in 2014. No human rabies cases have been reported in almost two years. The farming community has also been vigilant about reporting to their local State Vet office any suspicious animals and have ensured that all dogs on their farms have been vaccinated.

## **What is being done by the KZN Department of Agriculture and Rural Development**

Follow-up vaccinations have been carried out in the area of the outbreaks in Estcourt and next week a program will start in the Nottingham Road area. Dog vaccinations are an ongoing part of the State Veterinarians functions. Most of the communal areas of the Midlands have been well covered. While the State has been bringing the disease under control in KZN, it is not only the State's responsibility to ensure every dog is vaccinated, ***pet owners also have a legal responsibility to ensure that their dogs are vaccinated.***

### **What Can You Do**

- Ensure that all your dogs and cats are vaccinated –
- DO NOT APPROACH OR ATTEMPT TO HANDLE ANY UNKNOWN OR SICKLY ANIMAL!
- If a person has been bitten by an animal, report to a clinic, hospital or doctor **immediately!**
- Also report the incident to the State Vet. The contact details for the State Veterinarians in the KZN Midlands and Ladysmith areas are:

Umgungundlovu	: 033 3476245
Uthukela (Estcourt)	: 036 3523119
Uthukela (Ladysmith)	: 036 6346300