



agriculture & rural development

Department:
agriculture
& rural development
PROVINCE OF KWAZULU-NATAL

COMMUNICATION SERVICES

DAILY MEDIA MONITORING – 16 MARCH 2018

The Mercury – Page 2

THE MERCURY



KZN Agriculture and Rural Development's chief director for veterinary services, Dr Dumisani Mtshali, along with state veterinarian Dr Jana Kruger, vaccinate a dog for rabies during a vaccination drive, which was attended by the Agriculture MEC Themba Mthembu in Empangeni yesterday.

KZN rabies outbreak an emergency

Nosipho Mngoma

THE MEC for Agriculture and Rural Development wants the rabies outbreak in KwaZulu-Natal declared an emergency.

MEC Themba Mthembu was speaking after a third person was confirmed to have died from the viral disease.

According to the department, a 49-year-old Vryheid man died last Friday after being bitten by a dog.

A 13-year-old from Nsele-ni near Richards Bay and a 6-year-old from Hillcrest died from rabies after contact with a dog and a cat respectively.

Department spokesperson Khaye Nkwanyana said one more possible rabies death is still under investigation.

"Apart from the spread of rabies along the coast, state vets in the department have also confirmed a number of positively identified free-

How to identify viral disease

IN HUMANS, rabies presents in the form of "furious" or "dumb" rabies. Furious rabies symptoms initially include general weakness, discomfort, fever and/or headache and tingling at the bite site.

As it progresses, the person becomes anxious, confused and agitated becoming delirious, behaves abnormally, hallucinates and may have a variety of psychiatric symptoms before becoming comatose.

The "paralytic" or "dumb" form

of rabies is clinically similar to polio, but presents with descending paralysis, coma and death within two to 10 days.

Rabid animals tend to behave strangely, often aggressively. They also experience muscle paralysis, produce lots of saliva and experience difficulty in swallowing.

Wild animals may lose fear of humans and become strangely tame. Cows and sheep with rabies may appear to have something "stuck" in their throat.

Due to the fact that where there is rabies, there are bound to be human deaths, we decided to first bolster our vaccination clinics in all the hot spots and to treat this as an emergency," said Mthembu.

"We will, however, be fol-

lowing all the processes necessary for applying to the national government to declare this officially as an emergency later," he said.

Last week, the department released R6 million to fight the outbreak. This was boosted with a further R17m.

The department's veterinary services chief director, Dr Dumisani Mtshali, said the R3m would be used to set up vaccination clinics in hot spots and R14m to buy the vaccines and an additional 22 vaccination clinic vehicles to target cats and dogs.

"We will soon be targeting wildlife in game reserves," he said.

According to the National Institute for Communicable Diseases, cases have also been confirmed in Limpopo, Mpumalanga and the Eastern Cape, with another possible case in the Free State.

"We will, however, be fol-