



**KWAZULU-NATAL PROVINCE**  
AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

## KARAN BEEF SUSPENDS CATTLE INTAKE AFTER FMD OUTBREAK AT FEEDLOT

<https://www.farmersweekly.co.za/agri-news/south-africa/karan-beef-suspends-cattle-intake-after-fmd-outbreak-at-feedlot/>

***Karan Beef has suspended cattle intake at its Heidelberg feedlot following a foot-and-mouth disease outbreak, which was confirmed on Monday.***



Following the suspension of cattle intake at its Heidelberg feedlot following a foot-and-mouth disease (FMD) outbreak, general manager for Karan Beef, Henk Groenewald, told *Farmer's Weekly* that Karan Beef understood that the suspension would have direct implications on cattle operations and livestock planning.

However, he added that the step was taken to contain the disease and mitigate any risk to the broader livestock industry.

The financial impact on Karan Beef is expected to be substantial. Groenewald explained that movement restrictions will result in animals having to stay in the feedlot longer than planned, which will increase standing days and result in higher feed consumption and overheads, such as labour, utilities and veterinary care.

“We are working closely with industry partners and authorities to manage the impact effectively, with the focus now on stabilising the situation, minimising disruption and maintaining the welfare of the livestock,” he said.

The duration of the closure at the Heidelberg feedlot will ultimately be guided by the directives and protocols set by government and veterinary authorities. Based on current indications and standard containment procedures, Groenewald estimated that operations could be affected for about 60 to 90 days.

“In light of the current situation at our Heidelberg feedlot, the purchasing of new cattle will proceed more cautiously over the next 60 to 90 days. This is a necessary step to help manage biosecurity risks and ensure the stability of our operations.

“However, our various quarantine stations across the country will continue operating, and we will still be buying calves, although at reduced volumes compared to normal. We remain committed to support our supplier network as far as possible during this time, while also doing everything we can to prioritise animal health,” he said.

FMD is also impacting consumers. Groenewald pointed out that South Africa already experienced a substantial protein shortage before the outbreak, which was reflected in the high prices of beef and other protein sources across the country.

It is also expected to impact exports, with China already suspending imports of cloven-hoofed animals and related products owing to the spread of the outbreaks in KwaZulu-Natal, Mpumalanga and Gauteng.

While Karan Beef follow thorough traceability and biosecurity measures, the FMD outbreak at the Heidelberg feedlot could not yet be traced to the farm of origin.

Groenewald explained that tracing an infected animal back to a specific farm was extremely challenging, due to a lack of accurate information and the nature of feedlot operations, with animals from different sources often being integrated into various areas of the feedlot based on weight class rather than origin.

Karan Beef, nevertheless, was working closely with the relevant veterinary and government agricultural authorities to investigate all potential sources and to implement strict containment measures.

Groenewald said that biosecurity was not just a priority for Karan Beef, but also a national imperative, and that preventing the spread of FMD requires a collective commitment from every role player in the livestock industry.

“We implement stringent biosecurity protocols, including a strict 30-day quarantine period for all incoming animals, disinfection of vehicles, people and equipment and controlled access to sensitive areas. Despite these extensive precautions, the reality is that FMD is a highly contagious virus, and even with robust measures, the risk cannot be reduced to zero.”

He added that the outbreak underscored the critical need for every farmer in South Africa to know exactly where their animals come from and to ensure that they only accept livestock from sources with transparent and reliable health records.

“Adhering to strict biosecurity practices on farms – no matter the size [of the operation] – is the first and most effective line of defence,” he said.