



**KWAZULU-NATAL PROVINCE**

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# Steenhuisen acknowledges significance of Traditional Leaders at Imbizo

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Steenhuisen acknowledges significance of traditional leaders at imbizo

Agriculture Minister John Steenhuisen has announced a massive vaccination of the livestock to contain the spread of foot-and-mouth disease in KwaZulu-Natal.

Speaking to the media after his meeting with King Misuzulu at Emashobeni Royal Palace in Pongola, on the north-east of the province, on Friday, the minister said he felt that he should come and inform His Majesty about his department's plan to roll out vaccination of the livestock in the Zulu Kingdom.

Steenhuisen also gave the monarch the assurance that his subjects might safely consume beef from cattle that had been identified with the disease because it only spreads among the animals and does not harm humans.

He said the disease was only impacting the export market which was why the government needed to contain it because if not, it will affect the economy.



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"I wish to assure the public that it is safe to eat beef from the cattle affected by the foot-and-mouth disease. The disease doesn't spread to human beings so there is no reason for panic among the livestock owners and the public in general," he said.

Steenhuisen also allayed fears that was caused by out break of hand foot and mouth disease in the province which has affected human beings. The Minister said there is no correlation between the two diseases.

He was accompanied by the provincial Agriculture and Rural Development MEC Thembeni Madlopha-Mthethwa, who announced that a task team from her department will visit all the districts working with traditional leaders and livestock owners to start vaccination and quarantine of the affected livestock.

Madlopha-Mthethwa said her team will also visit livestock dipping tanks in rural areas to register all affected livestock as part of containing it.

Although he did not remain to attend the imbizo, Steenhuisen expressed his appreciation for the gathering, saying as government, it was important to hear the views of the traditional leaders about their input in the decisions taken by the government.