



Dip-tank challenges tackled in KZN FMD fight

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KwaZulu-Natal's 2 286 communal dip tanks must stay stocked with dipping chemicals to protect livestock against ticks and tick-borne diseases, says Agriculture MEC Thembeni kaMadlopha-Mthethwa, who heard farmer concerns about water shortages at dip tanks during an oversight visit to the King Cetshwayo and iLembe districts.

By Maile Matsimela, digital editor at African Farming

The KwaZulu-Natal Department of Agriculture and Rural Development's mass [foot-and-mouth disease \(FMD\)](#) vaccination campaign is currently under way. The plan is to vaccinate close to 200 000 animals in the two districts during the campaign, which runs until 5 August 2026.



Dipping remains vital for livestock health

Keeping the province's dip tanks stocked with acaricides (dipping chemicals) has been a priority since she took office, says kaMadlopha-Mthethwa.

"As a farmer myself, one of my main mandates when I was appointed MEC for this department was to see to it that all our dip tanks were stocked with acaricides."

Regular dipping remains one of the most effective and affordable ways for farmers to protect livestock against ticks, lice, mites and flies, while also helping to reduce the spread of tick-borne diseases affecting cattle, sheep and goats.



The Bhubobhoyi dip tank in the Ray Nkonyeni Local Municipality, KwaZulu-Natal. Photo: Supplied

Farmers raise concerns about water shortages

During engagements with farmers, the MEC heard concerns about water shortages at some dip tanks, particularly during the dry winter months. Some dip tanks with a larger-than-average capacity of 17 500 litres also need more chemicals, farmers said.

"The farmers have also informed me about the shortage of water during winter, and we are going to be looking at whether we are going to provide them with a borehole, but it will depend on whether the area has water underground," kaMadlopha-Mthethwa said.

The department will also consider increasing chemical allocations to dip tanks that are larger than the standard size.

Nearly 54 000 animals vaccinated in five days

The FMD vaccination campaign in King Cetshwayo and iLembe districts continues to make progress. As of 26 July, vaccination teams had inoculated 39 445 animals in King Cetshwayo and 14 529 in iLembe in five days.

The campaign forms part of the province's ongoing response to FMD. The department says only Amajuba and uMzinyathi districts remain to be covered during the current phase of the campaign.