



KAMADLOPHA MTHETHWA LEADS FRONTLINE FIGHT AGAINST FMD IN HARRY GWALA

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KwaZulu-Natal's battle to contain the spread of Foot-and-Mouth Disease (FMD) intensified this week as the provincial government ramped up its mass vaccination campaign across the Harry Gwala District.

The MEC for Agriculture and Rural Development, Thembeni kaMadlopha-Mthethwa, conducted an oversight visit to several dip tanks where veterinary teams are administering vaccines to protect cattle from the highly contagious disease that has disrupted livestock farming across parts of the province.

The vaccination drive, which forms part of the province's emergency response plan, is progressing according to schedule, with thousands of cattle already immunised.

The department confirmed that 54 846 cattle — including about 5 000 commercial animals — have already been vaccinated in the Ugu District, using vaccines manufactured by BioGenesis Bago in Argentina.

Following the Provincial Budget Sitting in Pietermaritzburg, kaMadlopha-Mthethwa travelled to rural areas of the Johannes Phumani Phungula Local Municipality, where she visited the Ndwebu dip tank at Nhlangwini near Highflats and joined veterinary teams on the ground.



"Our mass vaccination strategy is progressing according to plan, with everything falling into place," said kaMadlopha-Mthethwa.

She said additional vaccines from Türkiye-based manufacturer Dollvet had recently arrived in Gauteng and would soon be deployed in KwaZulu-Natal.

"These vaccines will be used primarily in the northern parts of the province where Foot-and-Mouth Disease SAT 1, SAT 2 and SAT 3 strains are present. As a department, we have decided to procure vaccines from the second batch that arrived in Gauteng, and they should reach the province before the end of this week," she said.

The department is prioritising the vaccination of commercial dairy and beef cattle in the Harry Gwala District while preparing to expand the programme to communal livestock.

KaMadlopha Mthethwa says **about 170 000 communal cattle** to be brought by farmers to **210 dip tanks across the district** as the campaign gathers momentum. Farmers in the affected areas say the vaccination programme is providing long-awaited relief after months of concern about the impact of the disease on their livelihoods.

Bongumusa Mngadi, a livestock owner from the Mhlabashana dip tank, said farmers welcomed the government's intervention.

"We would like to thank the government, particularly the provincial government under the leadership of MEC kaMadlopha-Mthethwa, for taking swift action to assist us," he said.

"We have been badly affected by Foot-and-Mouth Disease and we appreciate the government's attentiveness to our challenges."

Another farmer, Mjabulelwa Zondi, said the vaccines were a lifeline for communities dependent on cattle farming.

"Our livestock had been affected by disease, resulting in losses," he said. "We are relieved to be receiving these vaccines, which will help protect our cattle and restore our livelihoods."

KaMadlopha Mthethwa said the vaccination campaign remains a critical step in containing the outbreak and safeguarding the province's livestock industry, which supports thousands of rural households and contributes significantly to the agricultural economy.

