



Communications

The New Age, 15 January 2015, Page 08

Imbizo on foot and mouth disease

TNA REPORTER

AN IMBIZO takes place today to mobilise municipal and traditional leaders, and residents, on how they can help to end the embargo on the export of meat from the province, due to an outbreak of foot and mouth disease (FMD) in the Umkhanyakude district in northern KZN.

“The aim of the imbizo is to drive the message home to the local communities that they hold the key to helping South Africa maintain the lifting of the ban of red meat exports,” the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries said in a statement.

The outbreak of FMD in the Umkhanyakude District in 2011 resulted in the ban on the export of red meat and other livestock products from South Africa.

The country suffered R4bn losses a year until February 2014 when the ban was lifted.

The department said the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE), which monitors standards for the livestock products, would be reviewing the situation in their meeting in February.

The OIE sent a team of experts to visit the FMD prone areas in South Africa from November 30 to December



BAN ON RED MEAT EXPORTS:The outbreak of FMD in the free zone of the country has serious economic implications. PICTURE: GALLO IMAGES

6 and their report would be considered at the OIE Scientific Commission for Animal Diseases next month.

“The OIE experts on their visit were encouraged by progress made in implementing control measures

in the fight against FMD.

“They expressed satisfaction with progress made on the red-line fence separating the infected zones near the Ndumo and Tembe Game Parks from the rest of the district.

“However, they also expressed concerns and these included prioritising FMD control measures and creating greater awareness around the issues, especially for communities living near game reserves,” the department said.

Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries Minister Senzeni Zokwana who will also be at the Imbizo at Bhambanana with his deputy Bheki Cele, said foot and mouth disease was a highly contagious disease of cloven hooved animals and could cause severe production losses and once introduced into susceptible animal herd.

“It becomes very difficult and costly to control or eliminate. Due to the ability of the disease to spread quickly over large distances and the severity of the impact of the disease, it is considered to be a significant trade restrictive disease,” he said.

Zokwana said there was an urgent need for cooperation and collaboration between government departments, the livestock industry, farming communities, traders of livestock, game and their products as well as the public to ensure there was adherence to FMD controls to prevent the introduction and the spread of this disease.

alfredm@thenewage.co.za