



Communications

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CLOSE LOOK: The Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries Senzeni Zokwana, Deputy Minister Bheki Cele and KZN MEC for agriculture and rural development Cyril Xaba walking in the Indurno Game Reserve.

PICTURE: MBUYISELO NDLOVU

Minister in bid to curb foot and mouth disease

XOLANI DLAMINI

AGRICULTURE, Forestry and Fisheries Minister Senzeni Zokwana yesterday promised an intensified campaign to curb foot and mouth disease to ensure the country was able to export quality meat.

Zokwana was visiting the Umkhan-yakude district in northern KZN to mobilise and create awareness among local municipal leaders, traditional leaders and residents about foot and mouth disease (FMD) which has affected the meat industry in the area.

He was accompanied by his deputy, Bheki Cele, agriculture and rural development MEC Cyril Xaba, Umkhan-yakude district mayor Jeff Vilane and Jozini local municipality mayor Nkosi Mthethwa among others.

They also visited the Ndumo game reserve, Bhambanana abattoir and red-line fence, local farmers and western boundary fence that fall within the area that had the FMD outbreak in 2011.

Zokwana said he was concerned FMD had impacted badly on SA's economy.

"This has become a concern to the government and country as we have been banned from exporting quality meat to the international market." He said farmers and the government should work together to curb this disease. "We need to ensure that those cows with foot and mouth disease are separated from clean cows. We have created a high fence that will ensure that those cattle are separated with cows from Swaziland and Mozambique. This fence cost the department the amount of R65m," he said.

Xaba also appealed to local farmers to ensure that their cows do not wander into the game reserve. "Cattle need to be kept away from buffalos. We have fenced the nearest game reserves in order to ensure that we tackle foot and mouth disease," he said. He said the cattle would be marked with yellow and pink ear tags.

alfredm@thenewage.co.za