



MEC HONOURABLE TP KAMADLOPHA-MTHETHWA REMARKS DURING THE OCCASION OF FOOT-AND-MOUTH DISEASE INDABA

VENUE: UMHLANGA, ETHEKWINI MUNICIPALITY

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Programme Director

Head of Department Mr. ZN Dlamini

International delegates

EThekweni Municipality

HOM of Agriculture and Rural Development Department Mr. JA Mngomezulu

Members of the media

Ladies and Gentlemen

Good morning

Programme Director,

The Foot-and-Mouth Disease outbreak is upon us. Despite facing challenges in controlling it, the disease has not prevailed over us. Clinical signs of the disease are evident in most districts of KwaZulu-Natal, with the exception of uGu. The disease is not limited to our province, as Gauteng, North West, Free State and Mpumalanga provinces are also grappling with the disease, although not as severely as in our province, which has 180 FMD open outbreaks that remain unresolved. As of October 2025, there are 274 unresolved outbreaks across these provinces.

This situation calls upon us to deviate from 'business as usual approach' and requires a formidable strategy. Since the outbreak of the disease in 2021, we have been conducting rigorous vaccination campaigns, having started in 2022, resulting in the vaccination of about 800 thousand cattle. However, it has been a cause of great concern for the department that we have noted flare-ups of FMD even in areas previously vaccinated.



The continuous outbreak of Foot and Mouth Disease in KwaZulu-Natal has significant implications for the livestock industry, including trade disruptions and potential losses for farmers. We have convened this engagement with key stakeholders to develop long-term solutions to combat FMD. We are pleased to have industry experts, livestock associations, and private and state veterinary services present, all of whom are capable of assisting us in achieving a collaborative way forward. The situation we are experiencing regarding the FMD necessitates a collective effort from all stakeholders to devise a solution.

We are committed to collaborate as we deliberate on possible solutions. We are tapping into the collective expertise of all stakeholders to assess the situation and agree on a strategic way forward.

New outbreaks of FMD continue to emerge in different locations, all caused by the SAT2 FMD virus, which now appears to be present in a large area affecting communal, commercial, feedlot, dairy, and beef animals in KwaZulu-Natal. The same FMD SAT strain was disseminated by illegally moving animals via auctions to a number of commercial farms and feedlots.

FMD outbreaks call upon us to adopt a stringent approach and strategies in controlling the disease. To better mitigate the risks associated with animal sales at auctions, considerable efforts were invested in formulating and proclaiming Biosecurity Rules for livestock auctions under the auspices of the responsible Agricultural Produce Agents Council (APAC) in late 2020.

Due to the ongoing spread of the disease, the KZN Disease Management Area was expanded again in 2025, but outbreaks caused by the 2021 KZN SAT2 FMD virus continue to occur within and outside the boundaries of the DMA. While ongoing outbreaks in communal farming areas are controlled through quarantine and vaccination, efforts are being made to enhance vaccination coverage pending vaccine availability. Since mid-2025, there has been an increase in virus detections on farms and in feedlots outside the DMA in KZN, likely disseminated by auction and speculator



sales of illegally moved animals combined with non-adherence to the 2022 legally prescribed 28-day isolation of animals post-movement and insufficient biosecurity.

In conclusion, a holistic approach must be considered, where all beneficiaries of the free FMD status contribute to maintaining it. Several areas have been identified to support these communities, including providing training and infrastructure. The aim is to adopt new approaches and methods aligned with the World Organization of Animal Health (WOAH). This will enable the province to gradually achieve FMD-free zonal status, although I must warn that this a process which requires years of dedicated cooperation from all stakeholders.

I thank you.