



**KWAZULU-NATAL PROVINCE**

**AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT**  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

**MEC HONOURABLE TP KAMADLOPHA–MTHETHWA DELIVERS A KEYNOTE  
ADDRESS AT THE COMMERCIAL FARMERS ENGAGEMENT**

VENUE: KOKSTAD Town Hall, Greater Kokstad Local Municipality

DATE: 18 SEPTEMBER 2025

Programme Director

HOD Mr ZN Dlamini

Chief Director Dr Themba Sikhakhane responsible for our Veterinary Services

HOM Mr JA Mngomezulu

Our Commercial and smallholder farmers

Good morning

In July this year, I had the privilege of receiving an invitation from the dairy farmers at Orange Grove Dairy in Dundee to participate in efforts to explore solutions to mitigate the impact of Foot-and-Mouth Disease across the province. The meeting, which took place in Dundee, comprised commercial farmers, including officials and leaders from the dairy farmers' national association. This meeting with the dairy farmers underscored our commitment as government to eradicating the disease by working with all stakeholders. That meeting provided us with valuable insights into dairy farming activities, and I am hoping that by the time I leave this engagement, I would have been enriched with pertinent knowledge and practical solutions for challenges plaguing the sector.

The FMD outbreak in 2021 has had a significant impact on communal and beef commercial farmers. Until the second quarter of this year, dairy farms had been spared from FMD infections. However, symptoms of the disease were observed along the routes with some dairy farms, resulting in the sector urging for a government framework that would preserve critical corridors such as the N3 freeway from being declared a Disease Management Area or a DMA.

In 2025, the disease has spread to 7 districts: Zululand, King Cetshwayo, uMkhanyakude, recently Amajuba, uThukela, uMzinyathi, and uMgungundlovu. Most outbreaks occur in communal dip tanks and small-scale farms. We have noted a disturbing trend in the disease's recent spread, with 2025 cases mainly affecting commercial farms, particularly dairy farms and feedlots. Since 2021, the province has reported 207 cases, of which 21 were resolved. From 2022, we have vaccinated 896,000 cattle, including 196,000 this year alone.

We would like to assure you that our authorities are working closely with all industry stakeholders to control the spread of the disease. As part of our containment measures, we have issued veterinary movement permits, and we are pleased to report a high level of compliance among farmers.

I must also thank the former secretary of the ANC in KwaZulu-Natal, Mr. Bheki Mtolo, in facilitating this engagement with commercial farmers. I extend my gratitude to him and all those who made this meeting possible. This forms part of our efforts to promote partnerships with all stakeholders to tackle the disease. We regard livestock farmers as important stakeholders, given your significant contribution to the KZN GDP. According to the recent Agricultural Industry Report, this sector generated 490 billion rand with livestock farming alone accounting for 186 billion rand.

This highlights the significance of livestock farming as a major contributor to the economy, job creation, and food security. Furthermore, I would like to take this opportunity to appeal to you to refrain from employing foreign nationals on your farms. With the country's unemployment rate of 33.2%, our youths are struggling to find employment. Our industry offers a wide range of opportunities that require both skilled and less skilled labor, and it is unfortunate that foreign nationals are often employed in positions that require basic skills.

We believe that we can effectively contain disease if all of us could work together in a form of a partnership. Our officials are on the ground. We really want to see a partnership that would see to it that all pillars of animal disease control measures are adhered to. These are animal movement control measures, vaccination and awareness, animal identification and disease surveillance.

But most importantly, this meeting is for you to share your concerns and challenges related to the sector.

I thank you.