KWAZULU-NATAL PROVINCE
AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT
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KZN foot-and-mouth disease outbreak persists while progress made in Eastern Cape, Limpopo

While foot-and-mouth disease outbreaks are under control in other provinces, KwaZulu-Natal remains a critical concern.

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While foot-and-mouth disease (FMD) outbreaks are under control in some South African provinces, in KwaZulu-Natal signs of active virus circulation persist.

This is according to the national Department of Agriculture. “The designated management area (DMA) in KwaZulu-Natal remains in place,” said Minister of Agriculture John Steenhuisen, referring to the designated area still under restrictions.

The department said to manage the outbreak more effectively, an abattoir in the Vryheid area is being designated to slaughter animals from restricted premises, and a system has been implemented to assess biosecurity levels on individual farms. “The intention is to align the control measures with the biosecurity risks,” said Steenhuisen.

The department said the biosecurity, traceability and record keeping of animals bought and sold at auctions and similar industries were raised as a specific concern and this will be addressed by the department in a directive due to be published.

The department also announced that an order has been placed for much-needed vaccines to the value of R72 million.

Meanwhile the department is preparing to lift movement restrictions in the Eastern Cape, where the Kouga and Kou-Kamma municipalities have been under a DMA since July 2024. A total of 144,424 vaccinations were administered, and with the last cases reported in September 2024, surveillance has confirmed the disease is no longer present.

Similarly, Limpopo's DMA, in place since September 2022, will also be lifted after two rounds of vaccination in the Vhembe Municipality. "Two rounds of vaccination saw 23,024 vaccinations administered on cattle at 34 dip tanks, proving highly effective," Steenhuisen said.

In Mpumalanga, a single outbreak in Gert Sibande Municipality in April 2025 was traced to an auction in KZN. Surveillance of surrounding farms has not identified any further spread. A second round of testing is under way.

New cases, however, have emerged in Gauteng. "A feedlot and adjacent farm were found positive in the West Rand Municipality," said Steenhuisen. In the East Rand, FMD was confirmed in communal cattle, and investigations are ongoing.

China has since suspended imports of South African beef due to the outbreaks, although wool exports remain unaffected.

"Biosecurity is everybody's responsibility," Steenhuisen cautioned, urging farmers to isolate newly bought animals for 28 days and report any suspicious symptoms to local State Veterinarians.