

Limpopo foot and mouth disease under control

The outbreak of Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) in Limpopo is under control and the ban on gatherings of cloven-hoofed animals remains in place, Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development said on Wednesday.



Image source: [Gallo/Getty](#)

Didiza assured the committee that the veterinary services team is doing everything possible to ensure the situation does not cause any further economic harm.

"Since the outbreak in November 2019, the team has followed up on over 140 properties with possible links to specific auctions and affected properties. To date, 130 properties have been investigated and precautionary quarantine notices lifted on 87 properties," said Didiza.

Didiza noted that the matrix that links the two implicated auction houses to affected properties, demonstrate the complexity of the outbreak, and the risk that congregations of animals of unknown health status pose.

She also warned that the risk does not only apply to foot and mouth disease, but it has been demonstrated that the recent African swine fever outbreak had the same mode of spread.

Other diseases, including Tuberculosis, Brucellosis, Bovine Leucosis - have also been highlighted as risks that livestock owners should be careful of, when buying from sources whose health status is unknown.

"We do not take the decision to ban all gatherings lightly and we are fully aware of the economic as well as social implications of these measures. I assure you that it [measures] is meant to be temporary in order to curb the spread of the disease, and this remains the intention," the Minister said.

To date, Didiza said 18 positive cases have been confirmed and reported to the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE).

"All of these cases are in Limpopo Province with links, direct and indirect to the two identified auctions. Slaughter of cattle from affected properties has commenced and this is closely monitored by the Provincial Veterinary Authorities."

The Minister further highlighted capacity and concurrent functions, as some of the challenges in managing animal health and controlling disease outbreaks.

"I note the concerns raised by the portfolio committee on the ban on auctions and I will engage with the steering committee on Foot and Mouth on the uplifting of the ban, sooner for their consideration," said Didizi.

Didiza has reassured all citizens that the meat, and other products from FMD infected cattle is safe for human consumption, and "any products which are discarded from the slaughterhouse is purely to manage the disease and prevent further spread".

Consumers are reminded to only buy meat from reputable outlets as it would have gone through meat inspection and certified fit for human consumption.

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