

Progress: Foot-and-mouth disease outbreak

On 1 November, veterinary services were alerted to clinical signs suspected to be foot-and-mouth disease (FMD) in a herd of cattle on a farm in the Molemole local municipality of the Capricorn district, Limpopo. This farm is located in the previous FMD free zone of South Africa. Samples were collected and FMD was confirmed by the Onderstepoort Veterinary Research Transboundary Animal Disease Programme.



hhach via [Rxabay](#)

FMD is a highly contagious viral disease that affects cattle, pigs (domestic and wild), sheep, goats, and other cloven-hoofed animals. Signs of disease in animals may include depressed animals, sores in the mouth causing reluctance to eat, and lameness. The disease does not affect humans and it is safe to consume products of cloven-hoofed animals, such as meat and milk.

Monitoring

Following the outbreak, the farm was quarantined. Monitoring of production facilities, feedlots and abattoirs is currently being conducted in the Molemole district and adjacent areas.

International trade

The latest outbreak is adjacent to the Vhembe area, where an outbreak occurred in January this year. Close monitoring and vigilance in Limpopo enabled rapid detection of the incident and all control measures for the province are still in place.

A number of agreements were reached with trade partners to trade in safe commodities following the January outbreak; assurances have been sought that these agreements still hold.

Temporary ban on auctions

Live auctions in Limpopo, Mpumalanga, Gauteng and North West are suspended with immediate effect until further notice.

Advice to farmers

Farmers across South Africa are advised to practise strict biosecurity measures. All movements of animals should be done under close veterinary supervision and movements should be restricted as far as possible. Farmers should seek assurances of the health status of any animals they wish to bring onto their farms prior to such introductions. It is further advised that they obtain a veterinary health certificate from the herd of origin, confirming that the herd was inspected and that the animals originated from an unaffected area.

FMD is mainly spread by the movement of infected animals. The uncontrolled movement could thus spread the disease over significant distances. All livestock keepers should remain vigilant and report any suspected case to their local state or private veterinarian.

Cooperation between all members of the farming community should ensure a rapid and effective resolution of this outbreak.

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