



MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE

PRESS STATEMENT

UPDATE ON THE RESPONSE TO THE REPORTED OUTBREAK OF FOOT AND MOUTH DISEASE IN THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Date: 18th January 2019

South Africa reported an outbreak of Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) in the Vhembe District, Limpopo Province, South Africa, outside the traditional control areas of the disease on the 7th January 2019. The Government of the Kingdom of Eswatini guided by international animal disease control standards, responded by the precautionary suspension of importation of all cloven hoofed animals and relevant products (Ministry Press Release dated 8 January 2019)

On the 16th January 2019 South Africa informed Eswatini that following preliminary investigations, the extent of the disease outbreak had been determined and the FMD control/management area defined. This development allows South Africa to now give assurances on the trade in some products of cloven hoofed animals originating outside the affected area, in particular processed products such as milk, meat and animal feed.

In line with this development the Ministry of Agriculture revised conditions for importation of relevant products guided by the standards for the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE). The Ministry of Agriculture is now in a position to allow the importation of the following animals/animal products as well as products that have animal based ingredients, provided they are accompanied by a valid Eswatini Veterinary Import Permit and relevant Veterinary Health Certificate from South Africa.

The allowed products are:

1. *Animal/animal products that were not affected by the suspension;*

- Live non-cloven hoofed animals such as poultry, domestic and wild birds, rabbits, horses, donkeys, dogs, cats, zebra, lion, leopard, cheetah, crocodile, fish, etc.
- Products from non-cloven hoofed animals

2. *Animal/animal products that were affected by the suspension;*

- Processed products of cloven hoofed animals such as ham, gammon, pies, samosas, polony, russian, vienna, etc.
- Heat treated milk and milk products of cloven hoofed animals including UHT Milk, cheese, ice cream, yoghurt, powdered milk, etc.

- Products of cloven hoofed animals from other countries transiting through South Africa.
- Fresh deboned meat (cuts) from cloven hoofed animals

Products that are still not allowed:

1. Issuing of import permits for live cloven hoofed animals including livestock such as cattle, sheep, goats, pigs, and wild animals such as antelopes, wildebeest, etc. remain suspended. Importation of these animals is expected to be resumed once sanitary requirements and health guarantees have been determined and communicated. These requirements will include but not limited to pre-export isolation and testing for FMD as well as post importation quarantine in accordance with the standards as elaborated in the Terrestrial Animal Health Code of the OIE.
2. Straying and/or repatriation of stray cloven hoofed animals remain prohibited.

In summary , this means the Ministry, with effect from the 17th January 2018, is in a position to issue veterinary import permits for all processed products of animal origin, deboned fresh meat, processed animal feed and ingredients, as well as live animals (livestock and wild) other than cloven hoofed animals.

The Ministry will continue to monitor developments on this outbreak situation, and remain in constant communication with counterparts in the Republic of South Africa. In this regard, the Veterinary Department stands ready to advise further on the prevention measures implementation modalities which may be modified as and when it becomes necessary.

While the current status seems to be showing some positive signs in the resumption of trade in some products, the Ministry still regrets that we are not at the moment able to trade in all products in the usual manner, and hereby appeal and thank the importers and the nation at large for the cooperation extended to the Ministry thus far.

The Ministry wants to reassure the nation that once RSA has recovered its OIE recognised '*Zonal FMD free status where vaccination is not practiced*' normal trade in all the affected animal/animal products will resume.

BY THE PRINCIPAL SECRETARY