

# Foot and Mouth Disease: Vhembe Outbreak and Surveillance Update

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1 March 2019



agriculture,  
forestry & fisheries

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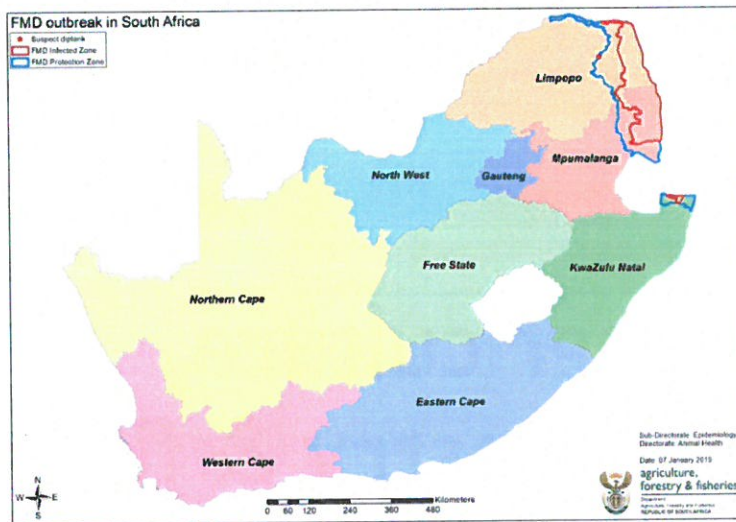
Department:  
Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries  
**REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

Report compiled by:  
Directorate: Animal Health

# 1. Introduction and summary

On 7 January 2019, an outbreak of Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) was confirmed in cattle in the Vhembe district of Limpopo Province. The outbreak occurred in the high surveillance area of the FMD Free Zone, immediately adjacent to the protection zone. The outbreak was reported to the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) and, as a result, South Africa lost its FMD free zone without vaccination status.

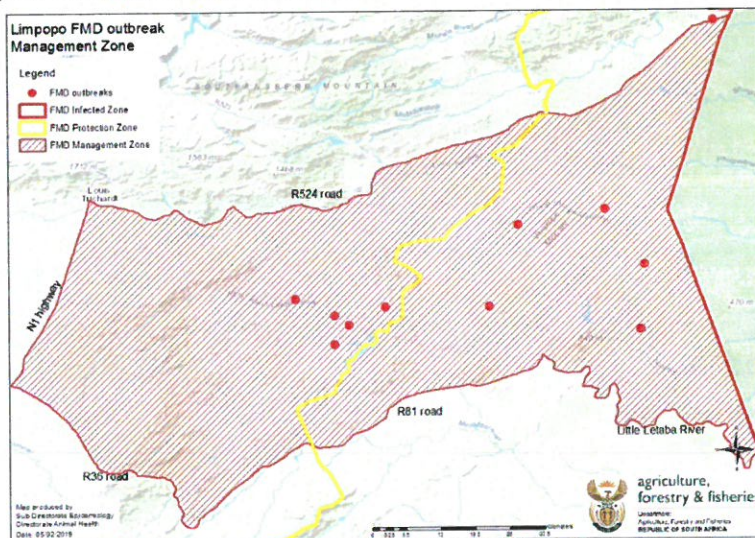
**Map 1: Location of the FMD outbreak in the FMD free zone of South Africa**



# 2. Outbreaks reported

It has been 4 weeks since the last positive location was reported on 4 February 2019. In total, 5 positive locations have been confirmed in the previous FMD free zone and reported to the OIE. These locations are all in close proximity within the Disease Management Area that was declared in Limpopo Province. The affected cattle are kept in rural villages with communal diptanks and grazing.

**Map 2: Confirmed FMD outbreaks and the Disease Management Area**

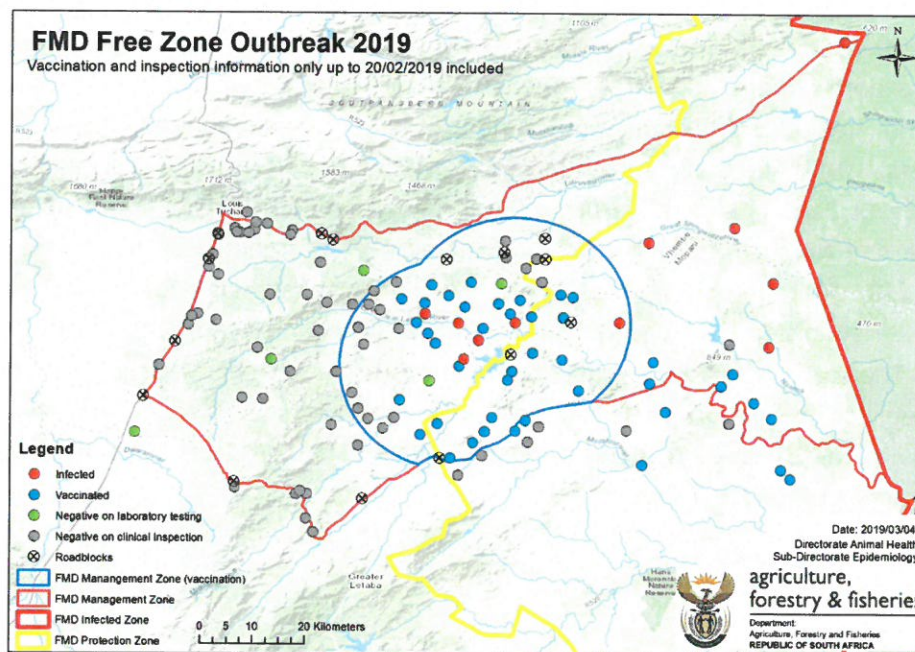




### 3. Control measures implemented

A Disease Management Area was declared and the details published in the Government gazette. Clinical inspections, vaccination and movement control are implemented within this area, as well as roadblocks to prevent movement of live animals and products out of the area. The Joint Operations Committee (JOC) and Veterinary Operations Committee (VOC) meet on a daily basis to ensure that all the measures that have been put in place inside this area are maintained. The locations of the disease control activities are indicated in the map hereunder.

**Map 3: Disease control activities in the Disease Management Area**



#### 3.1 Inspections / surveillance in Disease Management Area:

More than 450 clinical inspection visits were done at diptanks and villages. Some inspection points were visited more than once and the same cattle may have been inspected on subsequent visits to the same location. Where suspicious clinical signs are found, samples are collected and sent to the laboratory for confirmation. 12 points where suspect clinical signs were reported by the public – both inside and outside the Disease Management Area - were inspected and found to be negative for FMD.

#### 3.2 Vaccination:

More than 24 000 cattle at 61 diptanks/villages in the Disease Management Area have been vaccinated. These include about 13 500 cattle at 27 diptanks/villages in the former FMD free zone, as well as 10 500 cattle at 34 diptanks/villages in the FMD protection zone. The first round of vaccination of cattle started on 14 January 2019 and the second round started on 25 February 2019.

#### 3.3 Movement control:

Movement control is applied, with particular emphasis on preventing live cloven hoofed animals and their unprocessed products from moving out of the area. There is no sign that the disease has spread beyond the declared Disease Management Area.

#### **4. Epidemiological investigation and surveillance**

The virus was identified as SAT2 by the Transboundary Animal Disease programme of Onderstepoort Veterinary Research. This outbreak is therefore deemed to be a spill-over of the outbreak in the adjacent FMD protection zone in 2018. The 2018 outbreak was most likely caused by contact between stray buffalo escaping from the FMD infected zone in the Kruger National Park complex and coming into contact with adjacent communal cattle.

#### **5. Trade implications**

As a result of this outbreak, South Africa lost its OIE recognised FMD free zone without vaccination status and exports where FMD free zone attestation is required can not be certified. The continuation of trade in safe commodities is prioritized and negotiations are ongoing with various trade partners. DAFF successfully negotiated the revision of veterinary health certificates for beef to Bahrain, Egypt, Jordan, Kuwait, Lesotho, Qatar, Swaziland and the UAE, while negotiations with Mozambique and Namibia are ongoing. Namibia agreed to accept venison produced before 05 December 2018. Trade in pork from FMD free pig compartments has been re-opened to Lesotho, Mozambique, Namibia (partially), Seychelles and Swaziland and negotiations with Botswana are continuing. The markets for dairy products to various trade partners have largely been restored. Some markets for the export of hides, skins and wool are still affected and negotiations are continuing with these trade partners, particularly where the products have been processed to ensure destruction of the FMD virus.

#### **6. Awareness and extension**

More than 400 local livestock owners across 16 rural villages in the Disease Management Area were interviewed from 19 to 22 February 2019, in order to determine the impact of the disease control measures on the ground. The outcome of this effort will assist the technical task team to decide on a viable and sustainable solution to regain the FMD free zone status for the country. The next phase of this awareness campaign starts the coming week and this will focus mainly on the disease itself, how to identify it, its prevention and who to report to.



Director Animal Health

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