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POSITIVE FOOT-AND-MOUTH DISEASE RESULTS IN THE MOLEMOLE DISTRICT OF LIMPOPO

On 1 November 2019, veterinary services were alerted to clinical signs suspicious for Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) in a herd of cattle on a farm in the Molemole district of Limpopo Province. This farm is located in the previous FMD free zone of South Africa. Samples were collected and FMD was confirmed on 1 November 2019 by the Onderstepoort Veterinary Research Transboundary Animal Disease Programme.

Further identification of the strain is in process to determine the likely origin of the virus. The affected farm was placed under quarantine. Clinical examination of animals on the farm is being conducted to determine the prevalence of the disease on the affected farm. Measures were implemented to prevent direct or indirect contact between the different groups of animals on the farm. Backward and forward tracing is in process to determine possible origin of the virus, as well as locations to which the disease might have spread.

FMD is a highly contagious viral disease which 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 of animals causing reluctance to eat, and lameness. The disease does not affect human beings and it is safe to consume products of cloven hoofed animals, such as meat and milk.

Farmers in the whole country are cautioned to observe bio-security measures – not to allow any new animals into their herds, and to minimize the movement of their own herds to other farms. Any suspected case of the disease in animals must be reported to the local State Veterinarian immediately.

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