

Foot and Mouth Disease: Mtubatuba Outbreak Report

18 June 2021



agriculture, land reform
& rural development

Department:
Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Report compiled by:

Directorate: Animal Health

This report includes all information as available by close of business 18 June 2021

1. Introduction and summary

In May 2021, an outbreak of Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) in cattle was confirmed at a dip tank in the uMkhanyakude District Municipality of the KwaZulu-Natal Province. This location lies in the suspended FMD free zone and the affected area involves communal grazing land. Disease investigations are currently ongoing to determine the spread of the disease. The following map shows positive locations to date. Note that locations with close proximity appear as a single location on this map.

Map 1: FMD positive locations in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa



2. Affected locations

On 27 May 2021 clinical signs of FMD were observed during routine dip tank inspections in a communal grazing area in the Mtubatuba Local Municipality in the uMkhanyakude District Municipality of the KwaZulu-Natal Province. Varied clinical signs were seen, with the most prevalent being lesions in the oral cavity. Veterinary Services collected samples and the infection was confirmed by Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) as well as serological detection of antibodies against the virus at the Onderstepoort Veterinary Research OIE Reference Laboratory - Agricultural Research Council.

3. Initial control measures implemented

The affected dip tank was placed under quarantine and no cloven-hoofed animals or their products are allowed to move out of the quarantined dip tank area. Livestock owners in the District Municipalities of King Cetshwayo and Umkhanyakude, as well as the Local Municipalities of Nongoma, Ulundi and Pongola in the Zululand District Municipality were immediately informed to temporarily

suspend all movement of cloven-hoofed animals into, out of or through these districts. The area under standstill will be reviewed based on further disease investigations that will determine the extent of the outbreak.

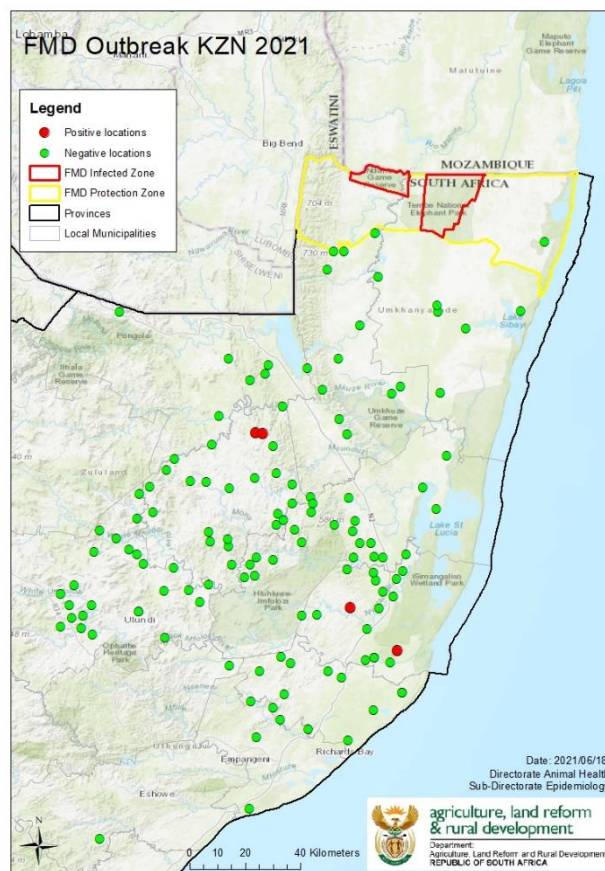
No emergency vaccination has been conducted at this stage. The use of vaccination will be considered once the extent of the outbreak and the rate of spread have been determined through epidemiological investigations.

Strict biosecurity measures are in place when sampling around the infected area to avoid the spread of disease through direct or indirect contact.

4. Epidemiological investigation

Clinical examinations and serological testing of all cloven-hoofed animals in and around the affected area are being conducted to determine the prevalence of the disease and the extent of the outbreak. As at 18 June 2021 the infection has been confirmed in four dip tanks. However, since this is a communal grazing area, it is likely that more dip tanks in the same area may be affected. So far, 12 255 sera samples have been collected from 353 dip tanks. The map below shows the positive dip tanks (red), as well as dip tanks within the same area where clinical and serological tests have shown the disease to be absent (green).

Map 2: FMD positive location in KwaZulu-Natal Province



The virus responsible for the outbreak is a SAT 2 serotype and is closely related to a SAT 2 virus responsible for an outbreak that occurred in the Protection Zone in northern Limpopo Province in 2019.

Epidemiological investigation is continuing, with backward and forward tracing in process to determine the possible origin of the virus, as well as pinpoint locations to which the disease might have spread. Movements of cattle that occurred in the past 3 months in the affected area as well as others linked to the sources or destinations of the translocated animals are being investigated. The source of this outbreak is also being investigated.

Strengthening of passive surveillance is being conducted in the rest of the country via communication with state and private veterinarians as well as owners of cloven-hoofed livestock. All mentioned parties are urged to be vigilant for any clinical signs that might represent those of Foot and Mouth Disease and are asked to report such suspicions immediately for further epidemiological investigations. Ground team members in the KwaZulu-Natal Province are governing communication efforts such as visits to livestock associations in order to provide information, raise awareness and address concerns of farmers in and surrounding affected areas.

5. Trade implications

Following the loss of the OIE recognised FMD free status in January 2019, agreements were negotiated with trade partners on the export of safe commodities, including heat treated meat and dairy products, deboned and matured beef, scoured wool, salted hides and skins and livestock embryos. Most trade partners have thus far still retained the negotiated agreements for these commodities, based on the guarantees provided for processing to ensure inactivation of the virus. South Africa is confident to certify for the safety of pork products from known FMD free pig compartments.

On 31 May 2021, Botswana announced the banning of the importation of live cloven-hoofed animals and their products as well as veld grass, bedding and manure-contaminated vehicles from South Africa. Live cloven-hoofed animals and their products originating from South Africa are also not allowed to travel through Botswana to other countries. These regulations from the government of Botswana remain in place until further notice.