

Foot and Mouth Disease: Mtubatuba Outbreak Follow-up Report and Surveillance Update

10 September 2021



agriculture, land reform
& rural development

Department:

Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Report compiled by:

Directorate: Animal Health

Please note: This report includes all information as available by close of business on 10 September 2021.

Update reports will from now on be issued on a fortnightly basis. All the updates contained in this report may not currently reflect on the OIE WAHIS system due to technical difficulties with the OIE reporting system.

1. Introduction and summary

In May 2021, an outbreak of Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) in cattle was confirmed in the Umkhanyakude District Municipality of the KwaZulu-Natal Province. Twenty-nine locations in KwaZulu-Natal Province have been identified as FMD positive and reported to the OIE. Following disease investigations to determine the extent of the spread of the disease, it is now possible to reduce the area under restrictions.

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



2. Affected locations

The index case of the outbreak was detected on 27 May 2021 in a communal grazing area in the Mtubatuba Local Municipality in the Umkhanyakude District Municipality of the KwaZulu-Natal Province. The twenty-nine positive locations identified to date encompass two clusters of dip tanks in communal grazing land, as well as two commercial feedlots. Varied clinical signs have been reported in these locations, with cattle in some serologically positive locations showing no visible signs of infection, while others show classical clinical signs of FMD. Clinical and serological surveillance at the feedlots indicated that there is no active disease spread amongst animals anymore and provisions were being made to allow for slaughtering with specific risk mitigation measures. 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, confirmed all infections to date.

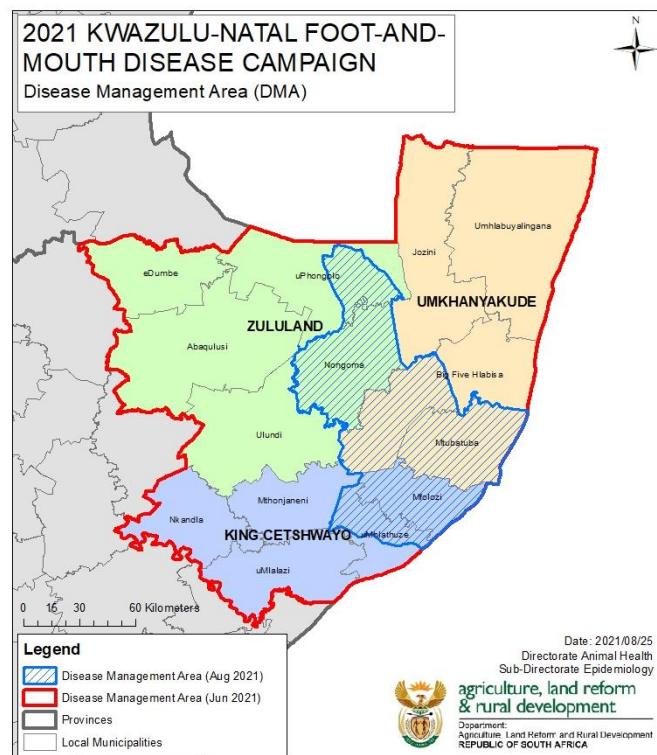
3. Control measures implemented

3.1 Declaration of a Disease Management Area:

The Minister of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development declared a Disease Management Area (DMA) in the KwaZulu-Natal Province in the Government Gazette No. 44783 on 30 June 2021. The DMA initially included the district municipalities of King Cetshwayo, Umkhanyakude and Zululand. On 7 September 2021, a revised DMA was declared in the Government Gazette No. 45109.

It was established that the disease, within the DMA, is still confined to two clusters of dip tanks in the Mtubatuba and Nongoma local municipalities. This shows that the restriction on the movement of animals out of, within, through and into the DMA was sufficient to prevent the disease from spreading. The reduction of the DMA releases areas that remained free of the disease from movement restrictions, while still maintaining restrictions on those areas where the disease is still present. Movement restrictions remain in place on cloven-hoofed animals, their products and genetic material out of, into, within or through the revised Disease Management Area, except on authority of a permit issued by the Veterinary Services of the area.

Map 2: June 2021 DMA (outlined in red) compared to September 2021 revised DMA (outlined and striated in blue)



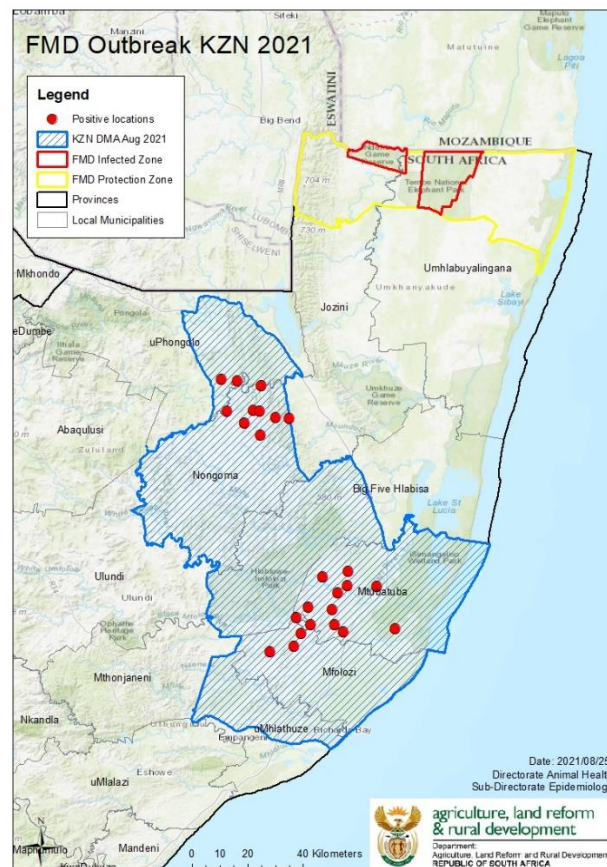
The following areas are included in the new DMA:

- The portions of the Pongola local municipality east of the R66, and south and west of the N2
- The whole of the Nongoma local municipality
- The portions of the Big Five Hlabisa local municipality west of the N2
- The whole of the Mtubatuba local municipality
- The whole of the Mfolozi local municipality
- The portions of the uMhlatuze local municipality north of the R34
- The whole of Hluhluwe uMfolozi Park

3.2 Movement control in the DMA:

The movement control protocol remains in place in the revised DMA with the aim to monitor and control movement of livestock and livestock products out of, into, within and through the DMA. The movement protocol is available upon request. Applications to move animals out of, into, within and through the DMA must be sent to the KwaZulu-Natal Veterinary Services (fmdpermitskzn@gmail.com) and are evaluated with regards to risk on a case-by-case basis. Numerous permits have been granted for movement and slaughter of animals from locations that are of low risk for spreading the disease and that are practicing adequate biosecurity and caution. Roadblocks and Visible Veterinary Patrols ensure that animals that are transported in the DMA have valid permits issued by the movement control officials of the province. Fines are issued to persons moving cloven-hoofed livestock without the necessary permission.

Map 3: Revised DMA with the two clusters of affected dip tanks in Nongoma and Mtubatuba



3.3 No vaccination:

It has been decided that vaccination will not be deployed as a control measure for this outbreak, since it is evident that the disease was not spreading faster than it could be contained by applying movement control.

3.4 General biosecurity:

Ongoing dip tank and farm inspections are carried out by Veterinary Services in the Province. Strict biosecurity measures are in place when inspecting and sampling around infected locations as well as throughout the areas at risk to avoid the spread of disease through direct or indirect contact. Farmers and dip tank associations have also been educated on the importance of biosecurity during a disease outbreak and have been urged to apply these practices to avoid further spread of the disease.

3.5 Controlled slaughtering of animals of affected feedlots:

The two affected feedlots remain under quarantine. Clinical and serological surveillance at the feedlots indicated that there is no active disease spread amongst animals anymore. Upon application by the owners who wanted to commence slaughter of animals from the affected feedlots, permission was granted allowing for direct slaughter at designated abattoirs, with specific provisions made for risk mitigation measures in line with the OIE Terrestrial Animal Health Code to ensure that the risk of spreading FMD virus is negligible. Meat from affected premises is not eligible for export.

4. Epidemiological investigation

The first and second rounds of clinical and serological surveillance around the affected areas has been completed thus the extent of the spread of FMD in the province has been determined. All samples from all the tested locations have been submitted with only a few results outstanding.

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 investigations to date have not revealed a plausible source for the outbreak in KZN Province.

Passive surveillance being strengthened in the rest of the country via communication with state and private veterinarians as well as physical visits to owners of cloven-hoofed livestock and chairpersons of dip tank associations. 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.

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 also confident to certify the safety of pigs, pig semen, raw pork and pork products from known FMD free pig compartments. Communication efforts are conducted to keep trade partners up to date with the disease situation in the country as well as the implementation of control measures to contain the disease.

In 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.

In June 2021, it was announced that live cloven-hoofed animals (importation and repatriation of stolen animals) as well as raw products from cloven-hoofed animals is banned from entering Eswatini. Products of cloven-hoofed animal origin that have been adequately processed via canning, cooking and pasteurization from all Provinces except Limpopo and KwaZulu-Natal will be allowed to enter Eswatini. Regulations regarding this importation ban will be adjusted with the changing FMD situation in KwaZulu-Natal Province.

Director Animal Health

Date: