



**CHIEF DIRECTORATE: STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION**

Private Bag X250, PRETORIA, 0001 • Tel.: +27 12 319 7319 • Fax 012 319 6681 Private Bag X9087, CAPE TOWN, 8000 • Tel.: +27 21 467 4502 • Fax 021 465 6550 • Web: www.dalrrd.gov.za

**MEDIA RELEASE**

**CONTINUED MEASURES TO CONTROL THE SPREAD OF FOOT AND MOUTH DISEASE**

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Minister of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development, Ms Thoko Didiza, is out on a campaign to put measures to fight against the spread on foot and mouth disease in South Africa. She met with the Limpopo Provincial government led by the Premier, Mr Chupu Stanley Mathabatha. Various outbreaks have been identified in KwaZulu Natal, Northwest, Limpopo and Gauteng.

“We need to manage the challenge we are facing as a country on the spread of foot and mouth disease in the four provinces. We are particularly interested in Limpopo because there has been identified cases since 2018 up to now, we need serious intervention. Our role here is to work and give comfort to stakeholders, especially the farmers on how we are managing it,” said Minister Didiza.

Minister Didiza went on to say that the need to curb the spread and contain the disease arise out of wanting to protect the market share of livestock and ensure that farmers, especially emerging black farmers, are protected as the market share is still higher at 11% of the total agriculture value chain.

“By containing the spread, we shall be able to manage the current ban on South African meat as it has negatively affected the agricultural output and revenue. As a result, we called a multidisciplinary team involving Office of the Premier, Provincial Treasury, Provincial Economic Development, Environment and Tourism to see what is it that we are not managing allowing this crisis to reach where it is,” further remarked Minister Didiza.

For Limpopo the identified problem contributing to the spread is the border between Kruger National Park, the farms and households bordering the park. Buffalos are known to be high carrier of foot and mouth disease, access to areas where buffaloes are and their mixing with cattle leads to the spread of the disease. In addition, movement of livestock from identified restricted areas to others that were free are major contributors. The meeting agreed that it requires vigilance to limit the interaction between buffalos and cattle.

Premier Mathabatha welcomed the intervention from the Minister. “Agriculture is one of the pillars in the Limpopo Development Plan. Any matter that threatens this part affects the general economic outlook and the recovery of our province, hence the importance of this meeting. I have called upon the Departments of Agriculture and Rural Development, Provincial Treasury and Limpopo Economic Development to work



as a multi-disciplinary team to attend this matter as a crisis. We need to claim back this share and not lose interest of our produce from international and national consumers.

The Minister also met with the Limpopo House of Traditional Leaders led by Kgoshi Malesela Dikgale. From the session they agreed on a quick interaction with other traditional leaders in Vhembe and Mopani within the next two weeks to spread the message of avoiding the spread of the disease.

Said Kgoshi Dikgale: "We would want to thank Minister Didiza for having considered us as a house and an important stakeholder. They are assisting us as leaders since members of the community are not able to sell their livestock. This is not the government's problems alone; it is our own people that are affected and we are willing to partner to put to an end this flood called foot and mouth disease through immediate meetings in Mopani and Vhembe districts."

A team has been put in place to work on an emergency plan that will address the action to be implemented immediately to make communities aware and what they should do to help prevent the spread of the foot and mouth disease.

For Enquiries: - Reggy Ngcobo 066 298 0980 (Minister Didiza's Media Liaison Officer) or Nдавhe Ramakuela (Limpopo Provincial Government Spokesperson) 082 200 5357 RamakuelaN@premier.limpopo.gov.za

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Issued jointly by the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development and the Limpopo Provincial Government

- Media Liaison Officer and Spokesperson: Mr Reggie Ngcobo, 066 298 0980 or [MLO.Minister@dalrrd.gov.za](mailto:MLO.Minister@dalrrd.gov.za)
- Eviction Toll-free Number 0800 007 095

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