

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

(for immediate release)

### **POSITIVE FOOT AND MOUTH DISEASE RESULTS IN THE VHEMBE DISTRICT OF LIMPOPO**

The national Red Meat Producers' Organisation (RPO) expressed its shock and dismay with the outbreak of foot and mouth disease (FMD) in the Vhembe district of Limpopo, as announced by the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries.

This outbreak is very bad news for the red meat industry, especially in light of the fact that the beef industry was on the brink of relevant exports to countries like China.

A previous study by the National Agricultural Marketing Council (NAMC) indicated that the South African agricultural sector lost more or less R6 billion per year during the previous FMD outbreak.

At the end of last year the RPO expressed its concern about the FMD situation due to the fact that the capacity to keep control measures in place was seriously lacking.

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In spite of DAFF's best efforts, sufficient funding on national and provincial level is the biggest concern.

The RPO will in collaboration with the national Animal Health Forum do everything possible to make sure that the whole process is sufficiently funded. The RPO is instrumental in the establishment of the provincial Animal Health Forums and will, within the structures, endeavor to deal with the problem urgently.

It is vital that Treasury, the national and provincial Department of Agriculture as well as any possible funding donors like the European Union are approached in this regard. Industry should also be involved.

Furthermore, the RPO will work with DAFF and all other organisations to deal with this outbreak in a manner that will create trust in order to retrieve South Africa's status as a foot and mouth disease free zone.

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