

FMD outbreak detected in KwaZulu-Natal

According to a media release by the Minister of Agriculture (DALRRD), another outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease (FMD), has, this time, appeared near Mtubatuba in KwaZulu-Natal. The release also announced the declaration of a temporary "stand still area" in 2 districts as well as in three further local municipalities of a third district municipality, in and around Matubatuba.



Image via [123RF](#)

Foot-and-mouth disease is a highly contagious viral disease of cloven-hooved animals and livestock such as cattle, sheep, goats, pigs, and many ungulate game species. The African buffalo is an asymptomatic carrier of the locally found southern Africa Type SAT strains.



Fight against foot-and-mouth outbreak makes progress

13 May 2020



While the disease is severe in naïve cattle and pigs, for example, dairy cattle in Europe, it is relatively mild and often almost symptomless in the local, indigenous cattle of the southern African region. Consequently, the disease is very strictly controlled under the auspices of the OIE and under its geographically based control measures, countries (or sometimes parts or zones of countries) are declared FMD-free or otherwise.

"To lose this FMD-free accreditation has very severe consequences on the affected country's ability to trade internationally with livestock, livestock products and even sometimes other agricultural products," says Dr Peter, CEO of Afrivet.

South Africa has suffered repeated crises caused by FMD outbreaks over the past 20 years, perhaps more than any other southern African country, with the exception of Zimbabwe.



Update on the FMD disease outbreak in Limpopo

24 Aug 2020



This outbreak is the fourth since 2000 following hot on the heels of the previous one in Limpopo resulting in South Africa losing its international FMD-free zone recognition. Such events have devastating economic consequences for livestock producers and associated industries.

Recognising the likelihood of another outbreak and thus the threat of subsequent control measures, and understanding the need for a new approach, Afrivet, over the past few years, teamed up with the recently late Professor Gavin Thomson to publish, during May 2021, a video and monograph, *Foot-and-mouth disease in South Africa: current problems and proposed solutions*.

Dr Peter Oberem highlights a few aspects of this publication: "In this we examine what has been the policy since the 1940s and, given the fast pace of technological advances in diagnostic tools and vaccines, propose a new look at policies that have obviously not been adequate for some time now as the situation, much as we see with Covid-19, is different in southern Africa with so many cases being subclinical and difficult to detect.

"We propose, together with modern cow-side diagnostics, carcass testing and vaccination, a move to "commodity-based" FMD trade controls as opposed to the geographically based one currently applied. This could allow for certification of products as being FMD-free even from FMD positive areas."

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