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No 69—2026] THIRD SESSION, SEVENTH PARLIAMENT

**PARLIAMENT**  
**OF THE**  
**REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

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**ANNOUNCEMENTS,  
 TABLINGS AND  
 COMMITTEE REPORTS**

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WEDNESDAY, 22 APRIL 2026

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**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**National Assembly**

1.	Introduction of Bills .....	2
2.	Appointment of whip.....	2
3.	Discharge of whip.....	2
4.	Referral to Committees of papers tabled.....	2

**COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**National Assembly**

1.	Agriculture.....	4
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# ANNOUNCEMENTS

## National Assembly

### The Speaker

#### 1. Introduction of Bills

(1) **The Minister of Communications and Digital Technologies**

- (a) **Electronic Communications Amendment Bill** [B12–2026] (National Assembly – proposed sec 75) [Explanatory summary of Bill and prior notice of its introduction published in *Government Gazette* No. 54548 of 20 April 2026.]

Introduction and referral to the **Portfolio Committee on Communications and Digital Technologies** of the National Assembly, as well as referral to the Joint Tagging Mechanism (JTM) for classification in terms of Joint Rule 202.

In terms of Joint Rule 196 written views on the classification of the Bill may be submitted to the JTM. The Bill may only be classified after the expiry of at least seven parliamentary working days since introduction.

#### 2. Appointment of whip

- (1) The following member has been appointed as whip of the African National Congress in the National Assembly with effect from 23 March 2026:

- (a) Kumbaca, Ms AN

#### 3. Discharge of whip

- (1) The following member has been discharged as whip of the African National Congress in the National Assembly with effect from 23 March 2026:

- (a) Muthambi, Ms AF

#### 4. Referral to Committees of papers tabled

- (1) The following paper is referred to the **Joint Standing Committee on Financial Management of Parliament** for consideration:

- (a) Monthly Financial Statements of Parliament – March 2026, tabled in terms of section 54(1) of the Financial Management of Parliament and Provincial Legislatures Act, 2009 (Act No. 10 of 2009).

- (2) The following paper is referred to the **Portfolio Committee on Justice and Constitutional Development**:

**Please Note:** The following entry replaces item 2(a) under Tablings, in the name of the Minister of Justice and Constitutional Development, published in the ATC (Announcements, Tablings and Committee Reports) dated 12 March 2026, on page 4.

- (a) Amended Domestic Violence Regulations 2026, made in terms of section 19(1) of the Domestic Violence Act, 1998 (Act No. 118 of 1998).
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# COMMITTEE REPORTS

## **1. REPORT OF THE PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE ON THE OVERSIGHT VISIT TO FREE STATE PROVINCE TO ASSESS INTERVENTIONS TO CONTROL FOOT-AND-MOUTH DISEASE (FMD) FROM 16 – 20 MARCH 2026, DATED 21 APRIL 2026.**

The Portfolio Committee on Agriculture, having conducted an oversight visit to the Free State Province to assess interventions to control the spread of foot-and-mouth disease (FMD) from 16 to 20 March 2026, reports as follows:

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

To give effect to its mandate, which includes undertaking provincial oversight visits to evaluate progress made in service delivery and to identify challenges encountered in the implementation of government programmes and projects, the Portfolio Committee on Agriculture (hereinafter referred to as the Committee), undertook an oversight visit to the Free State Province. The visit followed the classification on 13 February 2026, of foot-and-mouth disease (FMD) as a national disaster by the Head of the National Disaster Management Centre (NDMC) in terms of Section 23 of the Disaster Management Act, Act No. 57 of 2002. The Committee was particularly concerned with the continuing outbreaks of FMD and was alarmed with the detection of the disease in all 9 provinces.

In light of the seriousness of the situation and the disastrous losses that have been incurred by livestock farmers, including the negative impact FMD has on livestock exports and sector employment, the Committee decided on Free State as the Province had a significantly high and increasing number of FMD cases particularly at Fezile Dabi District. While the FMD outbreak was registered in the Province in July 2025, it has since become an epicentre with the highest number of confirmed FMD cases in the entire country, with more cases being detected every week.

The Committee was concerned with the risk associated with the high and increasing number of FMD cases in Free State, as Free State borders six other provinces as well as Lesotho. It was for this reason that the Committee undertook an oversight visit to the Free State to assess the implementation of contingency measures to control and manage the spread of FMD in the Province including the implementation of the vaccination programme and provincial veterinary capacity. The Committee confined its visit to Fezile Dabi District Municipality, which recorded more than 65% of confirmed FMD cases in Free State at the time of the visit.

### 1.1. Composition of the delegation

A multiparty delegation of 9 Committee Members supported by different teams of Parliamentary Officials as reflected in Table 1 below participated during the oversight visit.

**Table 1:** Committee delegation during the oversight visit

Members of Parliament	Political Party	Support Officials	Designation
Ms DD Pule <i>(Chairperson/leader of the delegation)</i> Ms S Davids Ms NA Ndalane Mr N Nkabane	African National Congress (ANC)	Ms A Kakaza	Committee Secretary
		Ms N Mgxashe	Content Advisor
		Ms N Qwabe	Committee Researcher
		Ms N Mrwerwe	Committee Assistant
Mr ZE Mthethwa Mr BK Madlala	uMkhonto Wesizwe (MK)	Mr M Gwadela Ms K Sinono	Protection Services Officials
Ms L Arries	Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF)	Ms S Govender	Communication Officer
Mr R Cebekhulu	Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP)		
Mr TRAP Trollip	ActionSA		

In the Free State (FS) during the oversight, the delegation was briefed by the provincial Member of the Executive Council (MEC) for Agriculture and Rural Development, Ms Elsabe Rockman, provincial Department and State Veterinarians (Vets), engaged with relevant livestock stakeholders and farmers. It also received an update from the National Department of Agriculture on FMD outbreak and interventions to control its spread in all provinces.

## **2. TERMS OF REFERENCE**

Oversight activities of the Committee are based on Section 55(2) of the Constitution which provides that “The National Assembly must provide for mechanism - (a) to ensure that all executive organs of the state in the national sphere of government are accountable to it; and (b) to maintain oversight of - (i) the exercise of national executive authority, including the implementation of legislation; and (ii) any organ of state”. The Executive is obliged to account on its actions. Oversight visits thus constitute a myriad of mechanisms available to the Committee for exercising its constitutional mandate to hold the Executive accountable.

### **2.1 Specific objectives of the oversight visit**

The aim of the oversight visit was to provide the Committee with an opportunity to engage with all the relevant livestock stakeholders and farmers that were affected by the FMD outbreak. The objectives of the oversight were to:

- Assess government interventions to control and manage the spread of FMD in the Free State Province.
- Assess the capacity of the province’s veterinary and animal health services.
- Oversee the roll-out and distribution of FMD vaccines in the province.
- Through engagements, elevate the understanding of the Committee Members regarding the challenges and impact of the FMD outbreak from the perspectives of the stakeholders that are affected and dealing with the disease on the ground.
- Strengthen the Committee endeavours in finding solutions to the FMD disaster.

### **2.2 Committee approach**

In observance of the strict protocols regarding access to quarantine areas and understanding the biosecurity risks associated with movement in spreading FMD, the Committee did not visit farms but held engagements with departments and stakeholders in central locations in Fezile Dabi District Municipality. Fezile Dabi District had become the FMD epicentre with more than 65% of confirmed FMD cases in Free State during the time of the visit. The Committee held stakeholder engagements in 3 local municipalities in the District, namely, Metsimaholo, Moqhaka and Ngwathe Municipalities.

The Committee conducted briefing sessions with the Member of the Executive Council (MEC) for Agriculture and Rural Development in Free State, the Provincial Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, the National Department of Agriculture and held engagements with different stakeholders that included farmer organisations, representatives from the beef, dairy and piggery industries, feedlots and communal farmers.

### **3. OVERVIEW OF DEPARTMENT REPORTS AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT**

#### **3.1 Briefing by the Provincial MEC for Agriculture and Rural Development**

The MEC for Agriculture and Rural Development in Free State, Ms Elsabe Rockman, presented a comprehensive overview of where the Free State (FS) Province is in terms of the strategy and implementation of the FMD control process. She emphasised that FMD is a state-controlled disease and symptoms and confirmation of the disease has to be reported immediately to the local state veterinary office. She mentioned that FMD negatively impacts animal health, farmers livelihoods, food security and trade (movement restrictions and export bans). The MEC highlighted that the current FMD crisis in South Africa calls for an expanded, integrated national FMD control and elimination strategy. At the time of the Committee visit, the MEC reported 396 confirmed FMD cases and 164 suspect cases across 17 municipalities in Free State. She reported that the outbreak was concentrated on commercial farms and Free State is the only province that has a dedicated system to update and publish media releases on FMD on a weekly basis.

The FS Province's vaccination efforts are aimed at vaccinating approximately 3.6 million cattle. However, there are capacity challenges including shortage of vehicles. She reported that Free State has a shortage of 40 Animal Health Technicians (AHTs) and the Province has asked the National Department to repurpose the employment of 10 000 Extension Officers to 50% of the number being repurposed for employment of AHTs. The MEC highlighted that despite South Africa being a signatory to the Malabo Declaration and other subsequent agreements where African Heads of States agreed that 10% of national budgets should be allocated to Agriculture, the opposite is true both nationally and at provincial level. She highlighted that FS Treasury allocates less than 2% of the provincial budget to Agriculture.

Following the declaration of the FMD outbreak as a national disaster, the FS Executive Council approved in March 2026, a memorandum for funding support to implement the FMD containment measures. In this regard, the Provincial Department requested additional funding of varying amounts from R281 million to R5 million. The funding is required for additional human resources and associated costs, as well as goods and services that include transport, vaccination programme, surveillance, equipment, animal identification, biosecurity, accommodation, travelling costs, information and awareness. The Province's FMD strategy implementation for the first two years will focus on mass vaccination, strengthening laboratory capacity and enhance animal movement control.

The MEC recognised that farmers, particularly smallscale farmers, are under severe stress but the Province is unable to assist farmers operating from commonages with fodder during times of need due to budgetary constraints. She highlighted the need for municipalities to step up and assist farmers as commonages are owned by municipalities. MEC Rockman further emphasised that the Province is fully aligned with the Minister's position on not allowing farmers to privately procure FMD vaccines as a strict regulatory environment needs to be maintained. The MEC highlighted that in the Province, there is good cooperation and continuous engagements with stakeholders where constructive and valuable contributions are received.

### **3.2 Update on FMD control and vaccination strategy by the National Department of Agriculture**

As part of the weekly updates on FMD control interventions and vaccination drive, the National Department of Agriculture (DoA) presented an update on the FMD situation in all 9 provinces (statistics up to 13 March 2026) including the implementation of the mass vaccination strategy. The presentation highlighted the increase in confirmed FMD cases across all 9 provinces. There was an anomaly between the DoA and the Free State (FS) Department of Agriculture's number of cases for the FS Province. The Province reported 396 FMD cases while the DoA reported 316 cases. The Department reported that there are often anomalies in numbers as a result of delays in result confirmation due to capacity challenges and associated backlogs in the diagnostic laboratory.

The Department reported that there is a central reporting system and 7 Provinces are reporting on the central system while the Western Cape and Limpopo Systems are still being linked to the central system. Free State remained the province with the highest number of confirmed FMD cases, followed by KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) and then Gauteng. The Northern Cape and the Western Cape had the least outbreaks at the time, with 2 and 10 confirmed FMD cases, respectively.

The DoA gave an overview of processes that were underway for the control of FMD. These included the risk-based vaccination strategy roll-out, plans to lift the KZN disease management area as FMD has affected all provinces, the revision of the FMD Contingency Plan to ease requirements on affected premises and a Section 10 Scheme (Animal Diseases Act, No. 35 of 1984) on voluntary vaccination that was being finalised for submission to the Minister. The proposed scheme would be gazetted once signed by the Minister. The Department also reported the amendment of the Section 9 (Animal Diseases Act, No. 35 of 1984) Schedule on animal movement that was gazetted in June 2025; to include pigs and movement permits for all movements.

The DoA further reported the arrival of the 1 million FMD vaccine doses from Biogenesis Bago, Argentina and 1.5 million FMD vaccine doses from Dollvet, Turkey and gave a breakdown of vaccine allocation by Province as illustrated in Table 2. The risk-based vaccination strategy saw 10% of the total vaccine doses allocated for emergencies to the Western Cape, Northern Cape and Limpopo Provinces and 90% (2.25 million vaccine doses) allocated to primary priority areas.

**Table 2.** FMD Vaccine allocation per province

<b>Province</b>	<b>Agricultural Research Council (ARC) vaccine</b>	<b>Biogenesis Bago</b>	<b>Dollvet</b>	<b>Total per province</b>
<b>Eastern Cape</b>	2 600	150 000	152 000	304 600
<b>Free State</b>	2 300	200 040	195 000	397 340
<b>Gauteng</b>	1 700	70 020	213 000	284 720
<b>KwaZulu-Natal</b>	0	200 040	560 000	760 040
<b>Limpopo</b>	1 700	100 020	25 000	126 720
<b>Mpumalanga</b>	2 000	100 020	95 000	197 020
<b>North West</b>	1 400	100 020	50 000	151 420
<b>Northern Cape</b>	600	50 040	35 000	85 640
<b>Western Cape</b>	600	49 740	100 000	150340
<b>Total per vaccine</b>	<b>12 900</b>	<b>1 019 940</b>	<b>1 425 000</b>	<b>2 457 840</b>

The total number of available FMD vaccines was less than the planned 3 million doses that the Department reportedly planned to bring by the first week of March 2026 as it reported to the Committee on 19 February 2026. There was also a reported possibility of bringing an additional 5 million FMD vaccine doses by the second week of March 2026, which did not happen.

### 3.3 Stakeholder Engagements

As already alluded in Section 1 and due to biosecurity measures, the Committee delegation did not visit farms, livestock handling or related facilities but held engagements with stakeholders in 3 local municipalities of Fezile Dabi District as outlined in Table 3. Over and above the listed organisations and farmer groups, farmers in their individual capacities also made inputs during the engagements.

**Table 3.** Stakeholder engagement representation in each municipality

<b>Local Municipality (LM)</b>	<b>Town</b>	<b>Stakeholders</b>
Metsimaholo LM	Sasolburg	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Synag Group (Dairy Industry)</li> <li>• EAC/Midland Group (Feedlots)</li> <li>• Milos Piggery &amp; Abattoir</li> <li>• Mabeleng Commonage</li> <li>• Sasolburg Commonage</li> <li>• Metsimaholo Farming Association</li> <li>• Individual livestock farmers</li> </ul>
Moqhaka LM	Kroonstad	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National Livestock Farmers Association of South Africa (NaLFA-SA), formerly NERPO</li> <li>• Pitso Commonage</li> <li>• Free State Agri</li> <li>• Sernick Group</li> <li>• Bospoort Farming Cooperative</li> <li>• Elly's Boerdery</li> <li>• Brentpark Commonage</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Food and Allied Workers Union (FAWU)</li> <li>• Individual livestock farmers</li> </ul>
Ngwathe LM	Parys	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tshwaranang Commonage</li> <li>• Parys Farmers Union</li> <li>• Zenzeleni Commonage</li> <li>• Individual livestock farmers</li> <li>• Conservation area owners</li> </ul>

### 3.3.1 Key General Issues from Stakeholder Engagements

Some farmer associations and agribusinesses in the Province acknowledged the regular engagements with the Free State Provincial Department of Agriculture and Rural Development and praised the assistance received from the Provincial State Veterinary Services despite challenges and the manner in which the limited vaccines received were distributed in the Province. However, the stakeholders further raised the following issues with respect to the foot-and-mouth disease (FMD) outbreak and how it is addressed:

#### ***Poor communication and lack of awareness campaigns***

Lack of proper communication, which creates uncertainty; as well as lack of awareness and educational campaigns to ensure that all farmers are kept abreast of the FMD outbreak, know about disease control measures including movement restrictions and vaccination drive. In Kroonstad, a farmer reported receiving a court order not to move his animals instead of a proper response after enquiring about animal movement when his area was put under quarantine. In Sasolburg, commonage farmers reported that some of their animals died after vaccination and because of lack of awareness and proper communication, trust was affected. Some farmers refused vaccination of their animals as they believed that the vaccine would kill them.

#### ***Delayed response to FMD outbreak***

Farmers highlighted that government has been slow in proactively responding to the first FMD outbreak, which was not effectively managed and whose wide spread could have been prevented through early involvement of the private sector and through vaccination. NaLFA-SA believes that if mandatory FMD vaccination was introduced 10 to 20 years ago, South Africa would not be facing an FMD disaster. This is particularly important because of the duality of

the country's agricultural sector and lack of capacity for proper animal movement and border control.

### ***Lack of farmer support***

Smallscale farmers reported that they do not receive farmer support from the Provincial Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, mentioning that government gives them farms without the necessary support to ensure that they succeed. They highlighted that extension service is inadequate and Extension Officers do not visit farms and when they do, they are unable to provide the technical assistance needed.

### ***Lack of pre-emptive vaccination***

Despite the spread of FMD from one province to the next, government failed to implement preventative measures to contain the spread and ensure that the disease does not affect other livestock industries such as dairy and piggeries, which are more adversely affected by FMD. When farmers wanted to implement pre-emptive vaccination to protect their clean herds, there were no FMD vaccines. By the time government started vaccination, most animals that got vaccinated were already infected, and vaccination of infected animals is a waste of money as the vaccine is not a cure but a preventative measure.

### ***Lack of movement control***

The stakeholders highlighted lack of movement control as there were still many animals that were moving freely without documentation. It was highlighted that even if some farmers are following protocols, without effective control of movements and proper border management, FMD will continue to spread. Concerns were raised on how neighbouring Southern African Development Community (SADC) countries are responding to the FMD outbreak and the impact on the country's intervention measures. The stakeholders also highlighted that municipalities do not even have functional pounds or resources to effectively operate pounds to manage stray animals.

### ***Uncertainty regarding timeous availability of FMD vaccine booster shots***

Farmers highlighted vaccine availability and timeliness as very crucial. While most animals have been vaccinated and vaccination programme continues in the Province, farmers raised a concern about lack of a guarantee that the FMD vaccine booster shots would be available every six months as required. Commonage farmers reported that some of their livestock was

vaccinated in November 2025 but there has been no communication regarding the booster vaccine.

***Private procurement of FMD vaccines (the matter is sub judice)***

In light of the challenges farmers face with the continued spread of FMD due to vaccine shortages and poor animal movement control, which renders contact and disease transmission inevitable, some stakeholders advocated for permission to procure their own FMD vaccines. They propose that government should allow the private sector to import the same vaccines that government is importing under the same Section 21 permit and conditions as government. They highlighted the need for the Department to engage the South African Health Products Regulatory Authority (SAHPRA) to fast track and streamline the issuance of Section 21 permits for vaccine imports considering that FMD has been declared a national disaster. Whilst government argues that FMD is a state-controlled disease and requires strict regulatory environment, farmers highlighted that they are allowed to source and administer vaccines for other notifiable state-controlled diseases such as Brucellosis and do not see a difference with FMD.

***Laboratory testing capacity***

Limited country capacity for timeous diagnostic testing affects timeous confirmation of suspect cases and updates on confirmed cases, which has an impact on business operations (quarantine) and vaccination. Only the Agricultural Research Council (ARC) Laboratory is certified to do the tests. In Sasolburg, farmers reported that some of their animals were tested for FMD in December 2025 and they never received the results afterwards.

***Traceability and availability of tags***

Farmers highlighted the need to update the traceability system as some farmers use brand marks, which are registered, while traceable ear tags with a unique code for each animal are now going to be used after vaccination. There was uncertainty on whether there are enough ear tags that are linked to the system for each animal that is vaccinated to ensure effective tracking and traceability.

***Lack of access to markets and impact of the F-branding***

Farmers emphasised their frustration and highlighted that lack of access to markets is the biggest challenge that is killing farmers as it severely impacts livelihoods, profits and

sustainability. Stud breeders had to cancel their shows, which usually takes place once a year. While farmers welcomed vaccination, its unintended consequence is the discrimination they face in abattoirs and auctions due to the F-branding that is placed on the neck of vaccinated animals. Animals with the F-branding fetch lower prices and in some places, the abattoirs do not accept them. Auctions also do not accept animals from red zones. Farmers requested that they be given vaccination certificates to prove vaccination status and period.

### ***The cost of quarantine***

In addition to market challenges, the cost of feeding animals during the 28-day quarantine period, which is estimated at R500 per animal per day, puts an additional strain to farmers and agribusinesses as there is zero income during the period, while they face other operational and employee costs. The stakeholders welcomed the discussions and initiative to revise the current movement restriction protocols but highlighted the urgent need for discussions with abattoirs, feedlots and auctions.

### ***Compensation for losses***

Farmers called on government to compensate farmers for loss of livelihoods as they are unable to sell and are struggling to feed their animals in areas under quarantine. The situation is much worse for smallscale farmers, dairy farms and piggeries. Stakeholders questioned the declaration of the FMD outbreak as a national disaster when government cannot avail resources to assist farmers while ensuring that FMD is effectively controlled.

### ***Public-private partnerships***

The stakeholders highlighted that government does not have the human capacity and resources to vaccinate approximately 15 million cattle, which excludes other cloven-hoofed animals country-wide, every six months. The great need to involve the private sector was therefore highlighted, contending that by building public-private partnerships to address FMD, so much can be achieved and at a much quicker pace.

## **3.3.2 Dairy industry specific issues**

- Dairy farmers highlighted the severe impact that FMD has on dairy production compared to, for example, beef production, due to the nature of dairy operations and the impact the disease has on dairy animals (severe illness & secondary infections,

reduced milk yield and quality, reproductive failures, increased mortality, long-term production decline).

- The National Department failed to proactively assist dairy farmers when the FMD outbreak was confirmed. When the disease started spreading among dairy herds, farmers wrote to the Department for assistance with pre-emptive vaccination to protect their herds, but none was provided.
- Most dairy herds were subsequently vaccinated after they have been already infected, which is an exercise in futility and a waste of money. While dairy herds have now been vaccinated, the main concern is timeous availability of the booster vaccine in six months.
- The stakeholders wanted to know government's plans regarding compensation for losses as some dairy businesses may not recover from the FMD outbreak. Dairy businesses lost between R5 million and R8 million for a 1 000-herd dairy operation. One stakeholder lost approximately R40 million in less than a year due to FMD, a loss that he believed could have been prevented had the private sector been involved 3 years ago and pre-emptive vaccination allowed.

### **3.3.3 Pig industry specific issues**

- Stakeholders highlighted that the focus for the FMD outbreak has always been on cattle while the FMD transmission rate in piggeries is high as the business is highly intensive and the disease is acute in pigs. When the first piggery was infected, there was poor information on how to handle the disease in pigs and dispose of carcasses.
- Piggeries need a specific protocol that is different from that of cattle as pigs show clinical signs very quickly and the disease spread as fast due to the high-density operations.
- When a piggery is put under quarantine, there is an animal welfare situation in the piggery as sows will continue giving birth as part of the process flow, which creates space challenges.
- The cost implications and psychological impact when the piggery is placed on quarantine are massive. During this period there is no income, but owners have to incur operational and personnel costs.

- The vaccination costs for pigs will be higher due to the high turnaround times for piggeries.

### **3.3.4 Commonage farming issues**

- Despite owning commonages, municipalities are not taking responsibility for commonage management and do not engage with farmers or attend stakeholder meetings when invited.
- In addition to lack of support from municipalities, farmers highlighted poor waste management as sewage and contaminated water from FMD foot baths flow to the grazing lands and rivers that are used by their livestock.
- Most commonages are not fenced, have no handling facilities and are open to all, which compromise the FMD control measures and vaccination drive. Quarantine is impossible in commonages as there is no alternative grazing land and farmers do not have money for fodder during the isolation period. Therefore, FMD infections are unavoidable.
- Farmers appealed to government for land and to assist with fodder during the isolation period as they do not have alternative grazing or means to buy fodder without access to markets for their livestock.

## **4. COMMITTEE REFLECTIONS AND OBSERVATIONS**

The Portfolio Committee on Agriculture, after interactions with livestock farmers and other relevant stakeholders, the Free State MEC for Agriculture and Rural Development and Departments, made the following observations:

- 4.1 The presentation by the MEC was comprehensive and specifically addressed the issues that the Committee needed to understand about FMD interventions in the Province and was therefore, commended.
- 4.2 The reported shortage of Animal Health Technicians and the Province's engagement with the national Department of Agriculture to address the shortage was noted.
- 4.3 Limited vaccine availability undermines the vaccination strategy as Government is more reactive than proactive. Due to vaccine unavailability, in Free State, the

vaccination programme was confined to areas with outbreaks and surrounding areas, which exposes unaffected areas to infections.

- 4.4 The presentation from the national Department of Agriculture (DoA) on the update on FMD interventions and vaccination strategy was sparse on detail and lacked specific information on vaccines and vaccination drive.
- 4.5 The increasing number of confirmed FMD cases in all provinces show that Government is not proactive enough to be ahead of FMD. Instead, the response strategy is reactive, which has cost farmers especially dairy farmers millions of rands in loss of revenue and businesses due to lack of vaccines when they were needed the most.
- 4.6 A concern that there are only 2.25 million vaccines nationally for the primary priority areas that have approximately 3.8 million cattle. The vaccines are even less than the 3 million vaccine doses that the Department reportedly planned to have by the first week of March 2026.
- 4.7 Serious concern was raised about the reported late payment of FMD vaccine producers, which is likely going to have an impact on future procurement and subsequently, timeous availability of vaccine booster shots.
- 4.8 Poor communication, lack of FMD awareness campaigns and poor stakeholder engagement both at national and provincial level, compromise FMD control efforts and farmers' ability to access markets for vaccinated animals.
- 4.9 Lack of contingency measures from government to assist through compensation and/or other means, struggling farmers and agribusinesses that incurred significant losses as a result of FMD, which is a state-controlled disease whose outbreak the state failed to effectively manage.
- 4.10 Poor intergovernmental relations among government departments and different provinces in controlling the spread of the disease despite the declaration of the FMD outbreak as a national disaster. The absence of municipalities in FMD engagements in the Province is particularly concerning given their role in commonage management and animal movements.
- 4.11 There is a need to refrain from path dependency and develop specific FMD control protocols that address the current scenario and for different commodities as FMD affects dairy animals and pigs, for example, differently from beef cattle.
- 4.12 Current legislation (Animal Diseases Act, Act No. 35 of 1984) is outdated and ineffective in addressing the current FMD outbreak and needs a complete review

- instead of piece meal regulations. Despite the losses incurred including mortalities, in terms of compensation, the legislation applies in the case of state authorised culling.
- 4.13 There is uncertainty regarding traceability and sufficient ear tags that are linked to the traceability system for each animal that is vaccinated to ensure effective tracking and traceability. This is particularly important for communal and commonage livestock.
- 4.14 It has been two months since the FMD outbreak was classified as a national disaster, however, there has been no movement regarding the deployment of additional national resources such as the South African Police Service (SAPS) and the South African National Defence Force (SANDF) to assist with movement control and border management.
- 4.15 The classification of FMD as a national disaster versus declaration of a state of disaster has not assisted in ensuring additional funding and resources are released to address the crisis. The DoA and the FS Province highlighted budgetary constraints in addressing some of the challenges highlighted by farmers. These challenges include veterinary and animal health personnel shortages, limited laboratory testing capacity, compensation for losses, limited support to commonages and inability to assist with fodder.
- 4.16 There is a need to investigate the low incidence of FMD cases in communal areas, which, like commonages, are free for all without or inadequate management practices for disease containment.

## 5. COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

Having interacted with the relevant stakeholders, the Free State MEC for Agriculture and Rural Development and the National and Provincial Departments of Agriculture, the Portfolio Committee on Agriculture makes the following recommendations to the National Assembly for the attention of the following Ministers: The Minister of Agriculture, the Minister of Land Reform and Rural Development and the Minister of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs.

That the **Minister of Agriculture** should –

- 5.1 Engage with the Minister of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (Cogta) and the National Disaster Management Centre (NDMC) regarding the classification

of foot-and-mouth disease (FMD) as a national disaster and advocate for the declaration of a state of disaster to enable the release of emergency funding and deployment of resources to address FMD. Submit to Parliament a detailed report on engagements with the Cogta Ministry and the National Disaster Management Centre (NDMC).

- 5.2 Engage the Minister of Finance for additional funding to ensure timeous and sufficient procurement of FMD vaccines and proposals for compensation of businesses and farmers for losses incurred as a result of the FMD outbreak. Submit to Parliament a report on engagements with the Finance Minister.
- 5.3 Submit to Parliament a detailed Contingency Plan with specific interventions and timelines to address limited laboratory capacity, weak FMD surveillance, personnel shortages and poor movement control during the 2026/27 financial year; as well as an update on the review of the country's Veterinary Strategy.
- 5.4 Submit to Parliament a Vaccine Import Procurement Plan to ensure timeous availability of vaccines in sufficient quantities including booster doses for the current (2026/27) financial year. Limited vaccine availability that has been reported by farmers and businesses undermines the objectives of the Vaccination Strategy, which seeks to contain the FMD outbreak and reduce infections by vaccinating as many animals as possible over a short period of time.
- 5.5 Submit to Parliament a detailed framework with timeframes on enhancing local FMD vaccine production as dependence on imported vaccines is costly and risky for long-term control and management of FMD.
- 5.6 Ensure that the Department of Agriculture (DoA) develops specific and responsive FMD Control Protocols for piggeries and dairy industries to curb FMD impact in these industries; while also considering the review of the Animal Diseases Act, Act No. 35 of 1984 to strengthen legislative response to the current FMD crisis and other future disease outbreaks. The Department should provide updates to Parliament on a quarterly basis.

- 5.7 Engage with other relevant Ministries at Cabinet level particularly the Ministries of Police, Home Affairs and Defence and Military Veterans regarding assistance with movement control and strengthened border management in light of the FMD outbreak being classified a national disaster. A report and outcomes should be submitted to Parliament in this regard.
- 5.8 Ensure that the DoA strengthens its central FMD reporting system by ensuring that all provinces are linked to the system and report timeously; and also investigate the reportedly low levels of FMD cases in communal areas in Free State for report to Parliament.
- 5.9 Ensure streamlined and timeous FMD communication and awareness campaigns in all provinces to ensure that all stakeholders receive the same message and farmers are not unnecessarily disadvantaged in some provinces due to conflicting messages or lack of knowledge.
- 5.10 Ensure that the DoA engages with abattoirs, feedlots and auctioneering businesses about FMD, its control measures, impact of vaccination on animals/carcasses to enable unhindered access to markets for farmers.
- 5.11 Submit to Parliament a detailed report on the activities of the Ministerial Task Team on FMD including a public-private partnership (PPP) framework for the control and management of FMD.

That the **Minister of Land Reform and Rural Development** should –

- 5.12 Engage with Municipalities in Free State including the Free State Department of Agriculture and Rural Development to discuss and ensure that farmers in commonages can be assisted with access to additional land to enable effective quarantine and expanded access to grazing land. A report in this regard should be submitted to Parliament.

That the **Minister of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs** should –

- 5.13 Ensure that the Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs addresses poor intergovernmental relations in the fight against foot-and-mouth disease (FMD) in Free State by facilitating the participation of Fezile Dabi local municipalities in FMD stakeholder engagements; and collaborations with the Free State Department of Agriculture and Rural Development and farmers in their endeavours to control and manage FMD in the Province. A report on such engagements and outcomes should be submitted to Parliament.
- 5.14 Ensure that the Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs facilitates and monitors the role of Fezile Dabi local municipalities in the allocation of resources to, and management of commonages, as well as animal pounds, which are under their jurisdiction. Lack of commonage management and dysfunctional pounds have a direct impact on animal movement control, which is the greatest contributor to the spread of FMD.
- The Minister should ensure that Cogta submits to Parliament a report on engagements with the municipalities, farmers and other stakeholders including plans to revive the commonages for sustainable livestock production, as well as plans to revive pounds.

*Unless otherwise indicated, submit to Parliament, within one month after the adoption of this report by the National Assembly, responses to the recommendations with required reports and plans as outlined.*

**Report to be considered.**