

The responsibilities of animal owners in terms of the Animal Diseases Act (Act 35 of 1984)

Notice: All owners of livestock



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The current threat of foot and mouth disease virus

The single greatest risk of introducing **Foot and mouth disease (FMD)** into the Western Cape is with the introduction of infected livestock (cattle, sheep and goats). The animals, their products (milk, meat, wool, etc.), their feed and bedding, people working or in contact with infected animals and their clothes, shoes, etc. and any object, including vehicles and handling equipment that had contact with any secretions (dung, urine, saliva, milk) of FMD infected animals. Infected animals can be infectious to other cloven-hoofed animals, directly and via the abovementioned things, even though the animals may not appear sick.

The effect of introducing this highly infectious animal disease into our province will be catastrophic, not only for the affected animal and human populations, but also for the farming enterprise and the economy of this province. It endangers food security, trade, jobs and the mental well-being of animal owners and farming communities.

How can livestock owners mitigate the risks associated with FMD?

To protect yourself and our province, every livestock owner in the Western Cape Province should implement the following steps:

1. No cloven-hoofed animals should be purchased and moved from any **Disease Management Areas (DMA)** or from properties under quarantine. The current FMD DMAs are declared in [Government Gazette Notice 50977 of 26 July 2024](#).
2. Cattle vaccinated against FMD in a DMA should be branded with an “F” mark, usually on the right-hand side of the neck, and should not be moved, except when it is directly to an abattoir for slaughter, under cover of a red-cross permit issued by their state veterinarian. If you see or hear of cattle in the Western Cape with such a brand, please report them immediately to the local state veterinarian.
3. Do not move animals if they may have a disease. Comply with the July 2024 Government Gazette Notice that stipulates that cloven-hoofed livestock may only be moved if accompanied by a **health declaration from the owner** of the animals, attesting to their health at the time of moving.
4. Take care when introducing new animals to your farm. You should unfailingly institute the July 2024 Gazette Notice requirement that all cattle, sheep, and goats that are brought onto your farm must be kept **separated from the resident herds for at least 28 days**. This provides enough time to detect most infections that may not have been visible initially and to stop them spreading before they are recognised. You must provide a declaration to that effect that should accompany every consignment of livestock coming to your farm including for animal bought at an auction. This will also apply to your own animals that left the farm temporarily and had contact with other animals, for example at an auction or agricultural show.
5. Buying animals at an **auction** outside the Western Cape remains very risky and is not advised. Auctions held within the Western Cape should be conducted strictly in accordance with the [Agricultural Produce Agents Council \(APAC\) rules](#) ([Biosecurity Rules for Livestock Agents – NAHE](#)). Do not participate at any auction where it is not applied rigorously.
6. In addition, it is also within an animal buyer's right to require a **veterinary health certificate** from any animal seller, especially the high risk neighbouring Eastern Cape and also KwaZulu-Natal, where active outbreaks of FMD are currently reported.
7. Animal transport and other vehicles (fomites) can also be a source of FMD virus. Insist on a **valid wash certificate**

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before granting access to your farm by any vehicle that transports livestock, feed, animal products or other farm necessities. **Provide washing facilities** for vehicles before entering or leaving your farm.

8. It is highly recommended that **bedding and feed** from a livestock transport vehicle be burned, buried or composted immediately as the FMD virus can survive for up to 6 months on such material.
9. To monitor and investigate possible high-risk livestock movements in and to our province the Western Cape Veterinary Services made available an online cloven-hoofed movement notification portal. You should use your registration link to **report every consignment of livestock moved** to or from your farm. An automated reference number is emailed and can be used as proof of compliance and that you are assisting to protect our province. The link to register <https://smarttech.elsenburg.com/survey/index.php?r=survey/index&sid=558864&lang=en> or **QR code (right)**, is also available on the Department of Agriculture's website: <https://www.elsenburg.com/veterinary-services/animal-health-and-disease-control/>. Please also ensure all livestock transport vehicles contain the documents required by the July 2024 Gazette Notice.
10. Be mindful of the movement of all people on your farm as they could carry the virus on their person. It is important to **monitor** these **potential risks** and implement procedures to **prevent exposure** to your animals.
11. If any person becomes aware of a suspected high-risk livestock movement into our province or your area, **please report** it to the local livestock theft unit of the SAPS and to the local state veterinarian.
12. Should any **suspicious clinical signs** (salivation, blisters in the mouth, limping or hoof lesions, severe and abnormal mastitis in lactating dairy cows) be seen, it should be **reported to the local state veterinarian** immediately and such **animals must not be moved under any circumstances**. The contact details for your local state veterinary office are available at: <https://rb.gy/tii7zw>.
13. If you are **informed of or hear a rumour** of a suspect FMD outbreak in your area, **do not move your animals**. Work with your state veterinarian and your industry to establish the facts.
14. **Identification of animals** is not only useful to prove ownership, but is a legislative requirement in terms of the Animal Identification Act, [Act No. 6 of 2002](#) and the Stock Theft Act, [Act No. 57 of 1959](#). It can also help to trace movements of animals, which is valuable for disease control purposes. As an animal owner it is your responsibility to ensure that all animals are branded/tattooed correctly with your own registered brand.

