

# The responsibilities of all owners of land where livestock is kept in terms of the Animal Diseases Act (Act 35 of 1984)

## Notice: All land owners

# InfoPak 1

## 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) but anything that had contact with an infected animal or its environment can spread the disease. These include animal products (milk, meat, wool, etc.), feed and bedding, people working or in contact with infected animals and their clothes, shoes, etc. and any object, including the 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, 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 economy of this province. It endangers food security, trade, jobs and the mental well-being of animal owners and farming communities.

## The responsibilities of land owners

Section 11 of the Animal Diseases Act (Act 35 of 1984) assigns a responsibility, not only to the owners of animals, but also to the **owners or managers of land on which animals are kept**.

1. To take all reasonable steps **to prevent infection** of the animals with any animal disease or parasite, and;
2. To **prevent the spreading** thereof from that land or animals, or;
3. If the animals are infected with any animal disease or parasite, **to eradicate** the disease and parasites, and;
4. To **apply** prescribed and suitable **treatment** for these animals, and;
5. If there is a reasonable suspicion that it is a controlled animal disease, **to report** it to the local state veterinarian.

In addition to the above, the animal owner is required to:

6. In the case of the outbreak of controlled animal disease or the suspicion thereof, the animal owner have to inform his/her neighbour, any prospective buyer and any buyer of his/her animals during the past 30 days.
7. Institute preventive compulsory vaccinations and dipping for animal diseases are described in Table 2 of the Animal Disease Regulations.

These vaccinations are:

- a. Anthrax for cattle
- b. Brucellosis for heifers at 4-8 months of age
- c. Rabies for all dogs and cats
- d. African horse sickness for all horses, but it is not compulsory in the AHS controlled area.
- e. Newcastle disease for chickens, racing pigeons and ostriches
- f. Foot and mouth disease for cattle in a controlled area, under the supervision of the state veterinarian

Compulsory dipping includes:

- g. Dip or treatment of sheep for sheep scab before movement

**Contravention** of the above legislated responsibilities by an animal owner and/or **a land owner** is described as an offence in Article 32 of Animal Disease Act. There is, however, also concurrent liability should a **manager, worker, representative, agent or family member** of a landowner contravenes any of the above.