

New FMD control measures outlined

On 8 July 2026, the new FMD (Foot-and-Mouth Disease) measures were published under Section 9 of the Animal Health Act 35 of 1984.

Introduction

The previous regulations were drafted to control FMD when South Africa was FMD-free without vaccination. Meanwhile, the situation has changed significantly, with more than 2 500 farms across the country having contracted FMD since 2019.

The new control measures take into account that FMD is currently out of control and that the measures must address the current situation. It is a living document that will be adapted as the feasibility and effects of the measures become known. The measures are temporary in nature and must be reviewed within 12 months. As FMD is brought under control, the measures will be adjusted again to be stricter.

The primary purpose of the measures is to allow farmers to trade while limiting the risk of spreading FMD.

The measures are less prescriptive, giving the state veterinarian greater flexibility to adapt them to each farm's circumstances. At the same time, it is expected that the farmer must also take co-responsibility to protect their animals from FMD.

The Minister of Agriculture, Mr Willie Aucamp, has announced the following:

1. Owners of split hooved animals may voluntarily vaccinate their animals against FMD in line with certain biosecurity measures, legal regulations, traceability and reporting.
2. OBP (Onderstepoort Biological Products) has given up its right as the sole importer and distributor of FMD vaccines. Any eligible entity may now import and distribute FMD vaccines.
3. The Minister also announced that farmers may vaccinate their animals themselves. It no longer needs to be administered by the state veterinarian, an animal health technician, or a private veterinarian, or under their supervision, as was previously the case.

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What has changed?

1. Day Zero can now be determined as soon as there are no new clinical cases occurring on the farm. There is no longer any need to wait for lab results.
2. The quarantine period has been shortened from 12 months to only 42 days from Day Zero.
3. From day 16 to day 41 after Day Zero, animals must be slaughtered at an FMD-approved abattoir. For this period, only the head and feet need to be destroyed. It is no longer necessary to destroy the fifth quarter.
4. From Day 42 after Day Zero, animals may be slaughtered at any abattoir and no part of the carcass needs to be destroyed.
5. Farms adjacent to a farm with FMD are only placed under movement control until it can be confirmed that the FMD virus has not spread. The state veterinarians are now empowered to deal with each case on merit. The rule that all farms within a 10km radius must be placed under quarantine has been dropped. Farms within this radius will only be placed under movement control if the state veterinarian deems it necessary.
6. Infected sites where all the animals have been removed, can now be repopulated with vaccinated animals from the original Day Zero.
7. It is not necessary for milk processors to separate milk from quarantined farms from milk from non-quarantined farms.
8. Milk destined for domestic consumption only needs to be pasteurised once.
9. Healthy animals that are vaccinated preventively are not subject to any FMD restrictions.
10. The state veterinarians now have prescribed periods within which they must visit farms and issue certificates/permits to determine Day Zero and to lift quarantine.

Breakdown of Article 9 Provisions

This is a list of the most important changes in the new measures that affect the dairy industry. The paragraphs in brackets refer to the applicable clauses in the new Section 9 Control Measures.

1. Quarantine (par.7)

- a. **Once a site is confirmed to be infected**, all cloven-hoofed animals on the site are considered potentially infected until the opposite can be proven. (par7.1.5)
- b. **No movement of cloven-hoofed animals** is allowed from a farm that is under quarantine, without a Red Cross permit, issued by the state veterinarian (par. 7.4)
- c. **Adjacent farms**

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- i. Adjacent farms and farms that are epidemiologically linked to the index farm (e.g. dry-cow and heifer farms) will be placed under immediate movement restrictions. (par. 7.2.1)
- ii. No animals are allowed to move from these farms until clinical investigations have confirmed that these units are FMD-free. (par. 7.2.1)
- iii. The state veterinarian is empowered to apply movement control more widely, to second and third tier farms, if in his/her judgment it is necessary to prevent the spread of FMD. (par 7.2.2)
- iv. Once the extent of the outbreak has been determined, the state veterinarian can expand or lift movement controls in an area to allow the movement of animals (under permit) from farms which are not under quarantine. (par. 10.1)
- v. Each outbreak's control measures are determined by the conditions on the farm and surrounding areas and will be determined on merit. (par. 10.3; par. 10.4)

2. Determination of Day Zero – (par 15.2)

a. Farms showing symptoms – (par15.2.1)

- i. If a farm experiences an FMD outbreak, it must wait until there are no new cases where animals show clear clinical symptoms. (par. 15.2.1.a)
- ii. The state veterinarian must then come and inspect the herd, within 5 days, and confirm that there have been no new cases, and record the date. (par. 15.2.1.a; par. 15.2.1.b)
- iii. 2 weeks later, the state veterinarian has to inspect the herd again to confirm that there have been no new cases of FMD on the farm in the meantime. (par. 15.2.1.c)
- iv. With confirmation that there were no new cases, Day Zero will be determined as the day of the first inspection by the state veterinarian as recorded under par. ii above. (par. 15.2.1.c)

b. Farms that have had FMD but no longer show symptoms – (par. 15.2.2)

- i. If the herd is vaccinated for the first time, Day Zero will be determined as the last day that animals are vaccinated for the first time on the farm. (par. 15.2.2.a)
- ii. If there are animals showing symptoms during vaccination, the determination of Day Zero will be made by the state veterinarian as described under par. 2(a) above. (par. 15.2.2.a)

c. Introduction of new animals (par. 14)

- i. This is especially true for dry cows and heifers that calve and need to be moved from a dry cow or heifer farm to the milking parlour farm.
- ii. If new animals are introduced into the herd, Day Zero will be determined as the most recent Day Zero that was determined for either herd. (par. 15.2.2.b)
- iii. The entire herd on the farm will then fall under the new Day Zero. (par. 15.2.2.b)

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3. Quarantine period – (par. 17)

- a. **Quarantine will be lifted 42 days after Day Zero** if there are no animals that have shown fresh symptoms of FMD during this period. (par. 17.3.1; par. 17.4.2; par. 17.6)
 - i. The state veterinarian must submit the application to lift quarantine to the Provincial Director within 24 hours after the requirements for lifting quarantine have been met. (par. 17.7)
 - ii. If the application is successful, the written quarantine cancellation notice must be issued within 24 hours. (par. 17.8)
 - iii. The person responsible for the animals (the manager or owner of the land or the owner of the animals) must be informed of the outcome of the application within 48 hours of it being submitted. (par. 17.8)
- b. **Repopulation of a depopulated farm after an FMD outbreak – (par 17.3)**
 - i. If all the animals on a farm can be removed (slaughtered or sold), the farm can be repopulated with livestock under the following conditions.
 - ii. Introduction of **vaccinated animals** may take place from Day Zero provided that the animals were vaccinated not less than 14 days or more than 6 months prior to introduction. – (par 17.3.1)
 - iii. Introduction of animals that have **not been vaccinated** may take place from Day Zero, provided that the animals have been isolated for at least 28 days and have not shown any symptoms during that period. (par. 17.4.1)
 - iv. In both cases mentioned under paragraphs 2.b.ii & iii above, quarantine by the state veterinarian will not be lifted until 42 days after the original Day Zero. (par. 17.3.2; par. 17.4.2)
 - v. Should there be susceptible animals, other than cattle, sheep, goats and pigs on the farm that cannot be moved (e.g. game species), an application must first be made to the Dept. of Animal Health before animals are introduced. Each case will be considered on its own merits. (par 17.5)
- c. **"Partial" quarantine (par. 7.1.2; par. 7.6; par. 17.2)**
 - i. On large farms or areas where groups of animals are epidemiologically separated, the state veterinarian can evaluate the situation and submit a motivation to the Provincial Director that only a portion of the property/area is infected and needs to be quarantined. (par 7.1.2; par. 7.6)
 - ii. The rest of the property/area will then only be placed under movement control until it has been confirmed that the animal populations are clearly separated and symptom-free. (par. 7.6)

4. Relocation of live animals from quarantined premises (par. 14.1)

- a. Live animals may be moved from quarantined premises under certain circumstances. The state veterinarian will determine the necessity of moving infected animals on a case-by-case basis. (see par. 14.2 for examples)

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- b. Relocation may only take place under a Red Cross permit issued by the state veterinarian. (par. 7.4; par. 14.1)
- c. All animals, which are moved from quarantined premises, must be recorded in a livestock identification and traceability system. (par 14.1)
- d. Animals on farms that are not FMD positive, but are under movement control measures, may be allowed to be transported to abattoirs, provided there are no fresh clinical cases of FMD in the herd. (par. 14.5.1)

5. Moving and processing milk from infected animals

a. Milk producers

- i. Uninfected herds that have been vaccinated preventively (and their milk) are under no restrictions and can trade as per normal. (par. 9.5.3)
- ii. Unpasteurised milk may not be supplied to the public from an infected farm. Milk may only be sold from a quarantined farm if it has been pasteurised on the farm. (par. 9.5.1.b)
- iii. Unprocessed milk (raw milk) from quarantined farms may only be moved to a milk processor with a valid Red Cross permit issued by the state veterinarian. (par. 9.5.1.e)
- iv. While the farm is under quarantine for FMD, the cow manure must be treated or composted in an appropriate manner to prevent the spread of the FMD virus. (par. 9.6)
- v. Feed and pasture should be considered infected with the FMD virus while the farm is under quarantine. Feed that is sold must be treated in an appropriate manner to prevent the spread of the FMD virus. (par. 9.7)

b. Milk processors (par. 9.5.1; par. 9.5.2; par. 9.5.3)

i. Milk for the domestic market

- 1. Milk processors must keep a record of all milk received from quarantined farms, including the farm of origin, the farm's infection status and how the milk was processed. (par 9.5.1.d)
- 2. Strict biosecurity must be applied with the collection and transport of milk. Trucks must be cleaned and disinfected after milk has been unloaded at the processing plant. (par. 9.5.1.c)
- 3. If milk is destined for the domestic market only, single pasteurisation is sufficient. (par. 9.5.1.a)

ii. Milk destined for the export market

- 1. If a milk processor undertakes to receive milk from farms that are under quarantine for FMD, and process it for the export market, the institution must first apply to the supervising state veterinarian. (par. 9.5.2.c)

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2. There must be auditable evidence that the milk processing can keep unprocessed and processed dairy products separated according to WOA standards. (par. 9.5.2.c)
3. Milk destined for the export market must be processed according to WOA standards (or a higher standard than WOA). (par. 9.5.2.a)
4. Milk that has not been processed to WOA standards may only be exported if the importing country agrees to this. (par. 9.5.2)
5. Milk, from FMD-contaminated farms that is delivered to the processor, does not need to be separated from milk from FMD-free farms. Unless the importing country insists that the milk must be kept separate. (par. 9.5.2.c)

6. Slaughter of animals that had FMD (par. 16)

- a. No slaughter of animals before the 16th day after Day Zero is allowed. (par 16.6.1)
- b. Written consent must be obtained in advance from the abattoir that they are willing to receive animals that are under FMD quarantine. (par. 16.2, par 16.8.1)
- c. Animals must be clinically healthy when transported to the abattoir. There should be no signs of new FMD cases in the herd after Day Zero. (par. 16.4)
- d. From day 16, livestock may only be slaughtered at an FMD-approved abattoir. Only the head and feet should be destroyed or processed from day 16 to day 41 after Day Zero. No other processing or disposal of any other parts of the carcass is required. (par.16.6.2; par. 16.8.3; par. 16.8.4; par. 16.8.5)
- e. Until day 42 after Day Zero, animals may only be transported to the abattoir under a Red Cross permit. (par. 14.3.1; par. 16.2)
- f. From day 42 after Day Zero, animals may be slaughtered at any abattoir without any restrictions.
- g. An export abattoir may slaughter FMD animals, provided that the importing country agrees to this and the abattoir can prove that there is appropriate separation of the FMD-contaminated lines and clean lines. (par. 16.9)

7. Vaccination (par. 11)

- a. **Farmers may vaccinate their animals themselves**
 - i. **Section 11.2 of the Section 9 controls** stipulates that vaccination must be carried out by or under the supervision of the state veterinarian or his authorised person. The Minister of Agriculture extended this authorisation to the farmers. So farmers are now allowed to vaccinate their animals themselves without supervision.
 - ii. The cold chain must be preserved. (par. 11.6)
 - iii. Failure to apply biosecurity, despite vaccination, can lead to prosecution. (par. 11.7)

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8. Record-keeping and Identification of Animals (par. 12)

- a. **All animals must be individually identifiable.**
- b. A complete register where all the susceptible animals are recorded must be available and kept up to date with any changes such as purchases, births, sales, slaughter and deaths. (par. 12.2; par. 17.7)
- c. Animals must be registered on a livestock identification and traceability system. (par. 12.1; par. 14.1)
- d. Documented evidence of all animals vaccinated against FMD must be available and prove that the animals have received adequate vaccinations and that their booster vaccinations are up to date. (par. 11.3)

9. Welfare (par. 13)

- a. If animals are to be euthenased or destroyed while they are under quarantine, it must be done in a humane manner. It is advisable to consult animal welfare organisations if there is uncertainty about the appropriate methods. (par. 13.2)
- b. It must be ensured that all environmental legislation is complied with in the removal of the carcasses. (par. 13.2)
- c. Carcasses must be destroyed, buried, burned or composted to limit the spread of the FMD virus. (par. 13.2)
- d. The state veterinarian must be informed of all animals that are destroyed, to ensure the record of animals on the farm is up to date, and ensure the safe destruction of the carcasses and infective materials. (par. 13.2)

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