



The current Foot and Mouth Disease situation in South Africa

12 December 2019

The NAHF with other stakeholders has compiled a list of frequently asked questions on FMD at present in the RSA.

We are attempting to answer as many questions as possible and have made a list of the most FAQs over the past two weeks to assist the farming community to understand the current situation.

These questions should clear up a number of issues; any further questions can be sent to md@nahf.co.za

PART A: GENERAL QUESTIONS ABOUT THE GOVERNMENT GAZETTE NOTICE 42883

1. Is the gazetted notice applicable to the whole country, or only certain areas or provinces?

The notice is applicable to the whole country. The media release of 14 November 2019 mentions only four provinces, but the Government Gazette notice of 4 December 2019 includes the whole of the Republic.

The prohibition is specifically targeted at those areas/premises where cloven hooved animals from two or more sources are gathered or brought together for further distribution to two or more places within a period shorter than 28 days.

2. Is there a movement ban on animals?

There is no ban on the movement of animals in general, although it is advisable that movements should be restricted and discouraged as far as possible. The Gazette Notice does not prohibit the movement of animals. It prohibits the gathering of cloven hooved animals, where there are two or more places of origin, and where the intention is to move the animals to two or more destinations, within a time period shorter than 28 days.

3. Are there any restrictions on the movement of animals from one farm to another?

The movement of animals between properties falls outside the scope of this Gazette Notice. The requirements that were applicable prior to the issuing of this notice are still applicable. There is no requirement for a government veterinary movement permit to be issued in terms of this Gazette.

If movements must take place, it is advised that a health declaration for movement is used, which requires veterinary inspection of the animals to be moved to ascertain that they are not showing clinical signs of Foot and Mouth Disease. This assists the seller and buyer of animals to limit potential spread of disease and subsequent liabilities.

4. Is the prohibition only applicable to auctions, or also to shows?

The prohibition is applicable to any activity where animals are *gathered from two or more places of origin*, and will be distributed to two or more places of destination, within a period shorter than 28 days. This will include shows in most cases.

5. How long will the prohibition remain in place?

It is not possible to estimate on how long the prohibition will remain in place, but the intention is to make this period as short as possible. The purpose of the prohibition is to prevent further spread of Foot and Mouth Disease in the period when the extent of the outbreak is not yet known. Once no new cases (suspect or confirmed) have been reported for a 28 day period, the Director will re-consider the prohibition.

6. If someone contravenes this gazette notice, must they be prosecuted?

The purpose of this prohibition is to assist with limiting the spread of Foot and Mouth Disease during the current outbreak and prosecution of clients for contravention is not the main focus. Any contravention of this Gazette Notice or the Animal Diseases Act, 1984 (Act No 35 of 1984) may however lead to charging and prosecution of the offender. Civil and criminal liability charges may be laid between private parties that are affected by such contraventions.

7. If an auction is placed under quarantine in terms of this notice, and 28 days have passed, can the auction go ahead once quarantine is lifted?

An auction facility that has been placed under quarantine must comply with the conditions as stipulated in the quarantine notice that has been served. In some cases this may be testing, for example if animals were received from potentially affected areas. Once the quarantine has been lifted, the animals can be distributed.

8. How will live sales in the informal trade be regulated?

The emphasis must be on self-regulation and buyers must be made aware that they must only buy safe animals. Sellers of infected animals open themselves up to prosecution and civil lawsuits, should they cause the spread of FMD.

9. The gazette mentions on point 3 (3) "in the format as prescribed by the director". Where is the format?

There is no single format for the whole country, since the type of records to be kept may differ with the different farming systems. As a basic standard, the individual identification of animals, dates of arrival onto and movement off the property, details of origin and details of destination will be required. The Provincial Director Veterinary Services may evaluate the records of the client and prescribe additional information to be kept, if necessary to ensure that the records are auditable for the purpose of this gazette.

10. Is the Gazette notice correctly scanned in, since there are so many blank pages?

The Gazette notice consists of:

1. Definitions
2. Objective of control measure
3. (1), (2) and (3) Prohibition on the live auction of cloven hoofed animals in certain areas.

There is a front page (page 1), a contents page (page 3 at the top only), and the two pages containing the information of the notice (pages 4 and 5). Pages 2, 6, 7 and 8 are blank.

PART B: SPECIFIC SCENARIOS

1. If a client is willing to keep all animals isolated at the auction pens for 28 days, can the auction then go ahead after the 28 days?

Yes, provided that:

- The state veterinarian is notified and is in agreement to supervise the entire process.
- The client must be able to prove, through auditable records, that all animals on the premises have been there for 28 days (not only the animals to be auctioned).
- No other animals have been added to the property during this period.
- There must be no clinical signs of Foot and Mouth Disease on the premises.

If these isolated animals show any signs of Foot and Mouth Disease, the auction premises will become a suspect location, must be placed under precautionary quarantine and testing of animals will commence. The animals will not be allowed to move off the quarantine auction facility until quarantine has been lifted, in accordance with the procedures for suspect and/or positive locations.

2. Is transport of animals allowed from farm to abattoir or from a feedlot to an abattoir?

Movement of animals from a farm or a feedlot directly to an abattoir is allowed, as the abattoir is an end-point destination from where the animals will not be distributed. Take note that it is illegal to move animals out of an abattoir facility based on the Meat Safety Act, 2000 (Act No. 40 of 2000).

3. If the client is willing to keep all animals isolated on the farm of origin for 28 days, can they then be sent to an auction to be sold?

The client may apply for exemption from the Gazette Notice to send these animals to an auction. This request for exemption will have to be supported and recommended by the Director(s) of Veterinary Services of the Province(s) involved.

4. Can an auction proceed if a single farmer's livestock is auctioned off, with no external animals added, but with multiple buyers?

Yes, this is allowed since the animals will come from a single origin. The single origin farm must also comply with the requirements of the Gazette notice.

The seller must declare and be able to prove, through auditable records, that no new animals were introduced onto the farm of origin for 28 days prior to movement to the auction. No other

animals may be added to the auction property during the period when the seller's animals are there.

5. Are on-farm auctions allowed?

Yes, provided that:

- The state veterinarian is notified and is in agreement to supervise the entire process.
- The client must be able to prove, through auditable records, that all animals on the premises have been there for 28 days (not only the animals to be auctioned)
- No other animals have been added to the property during this period
- There must be no clinical signs of Foot and Mouth Disease on the premises

6. Where the location is a feedlot or other farm where the animals are kept until they are slaughter ready (either within 28 days or more), what requirements must be complied with?

Animals may be gathered from different locations to a feedlot or another farm pre-slaughter, if they will move from that feedlot or farm to one location only, which can only be the abattoir. If there is a possibility that the animals may be distributed from the farm or feedlot to several other locations (ie not to an abattoir), then they must remain on the farm or feedlot for at least 28 days, according to the conditions of Scenario B1 above.

7. Sometimes feedlots select heifers to sell to other farmers, so there is a mix of animals at the feedlot and not all go for slaughter. How will this practise be affected by the prohibition?

Feedlots that sell animals to other farms will be breaking the law unless all animals in the feedlot originate from one source, or if all animals in the feedlot have been on the farm for 28 days, according to the conditions of Scenario B1 above.