



Masisi community educated on Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD): By Muifha Tshifhiwa

With the Department of Agriculture Forestry and Fisheries (DAFF) Minister, Mr Senzeni Zokwana, his deputy, General Bheki Cele, Limpopo Agriculture MEC Joy Matshoge and Mutale Municipal Mayor, Ms Rambuda Sarah in the lead, all three spheres of government hosted the FMD campaign at Masisi in Vhembe on 16 January 2015.

The government addressed livestock farmers and the community about the FMD and its economic consequences. He said FMD denied countries to export livestock [or its products like meat] to other countries. The minister requested communities, community leaders and farmers to partner with government in fighting against the disease.

Zokwa

na indicated that protecting grazing areas from being invaded by buffalos, taking care of erected fences to protect buffalos from escaping to communal grazing areas and vaccinations of livestock could prevent and reduce the spread of FMD. He blamed stock theft which he said also contributed to the spread of the disease.

“Those involved in stock theft create control problems as sometimes stolen stock may be from restricted areas,” he stated.

Foot and Mouth Disease Imbizos are mostly held in communities near game parks and bordering countries. Since African Buffalos are permanent carriers, the disease can be spread to cattle and other cloven-hoofed ruminants if left grazing at the same area as buffalos.

The disease is rarely fatal in adult animals but the mortality rate is high in young animals and in susceptible populations morbidity approaches 100%. Animals that recover from the disease are usually weakened and debilitated.

FMD is transmitted through excretions and secretions of infected animals. The virus can be present in milk and semen up to four days before clinical signs of the disease are detected. Animals that recover may act as carriers of the disease. It can be spread through the breath of infected animals; contaminated pens and buildings or vehicles; contaminated food or water, infected meat or animal products, either raw or improperly cooked, fed to susceptible animals.

Clinical signs of the disease include fever, hyper salivation, depression, loss of appetite, loss of weight and drop in milk production.