



**03 June 2019**

### **Media release on Anthrax outbreaks**

The Free State Department of Agriculture of Agriculture and Rural Development through Veterinary Services has made an impassioned plea to the SAPS Provincial Commissioner and SANDF's Joint Tactical Head to increase patrols, investigate and monitor any movement of animals along the border of Lesotho. This follows the outbreak of Anthrax in the Mountain Kingdom.

The Lesotho Veterinary Authority earlier reported three anthrax outbreaks to the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE). A total of 12 cattle are reported to have died as a results of the said outbreak.

Anthrax is a disease of humans and warm-blooded animals and is caused by the bacterium *Bacillus anthracis*. Animals become infected by eating or licking material that is contaminated with spores or breathing in the spores. These spores are formed when the bacteria are exposed to oxygen in the event that an animal that died of anthrax is cut open. The spores are resistant and survive for long periods (up to decades) in the environment. Humans most commonly contract the disease through contact with anthrax infected animals or animal products such as meat.

#### **How can livestock owners protect their livestock?**

- a) The livestock farmers are advised to vaccinate their animals against Anthrax at least once every 12 months.
- b) Any sudden deaths of livestock with blood oozing from carcass openings must be reported to the nearest State Veterinarian office.
- c) Carcasses of animals that died suddenly must not be opened.
- d) Farmers are advised to purchase livestock from reputable sources.
- e) We advise the community not to eat or handle meat of animals that died suddenly
- f) The community is advised to slaughter animals for own consumption

**N.B** Members of the community are urged to buy meat that originates from an abattoir that is registered in terms of the Meat Safety Act, 2000 (Act No. 40 of 2000). Animals slaughtered at these abattoirs are inspected before and after slaughter and only meat that is passed fit for human consumption is released from these registered abattoirs.



Currently, the National Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development is in contact with the Veterinary Authority of Lesotho to ensure safe trade while the anthrax outbreaks are ongoing. A ban has been imposed on imports from Lesotho into South Africa of live animals susceptible to anthrax and products of these animals, including wool.

The Free State Department of Agriculture and Rural Development will undertake Anthrax awareness campaigns in the following towns:

- Ladybrand on 11 June 2019
- Clocolan on 11 June 2019,
- Hobhouse on 12 June 2019
- Tweespruit on 12 June 2019
- QWAQWA on 19 June 2019
- Van Rooyen on 13 June 2019

**For technical enquiries kindly contact:**

Dr. Kristen Mojapelo

Tel: 051 436 3677

E-mail: drkris@fs.agric.za

**For media enquiries contact:**

Ms Zimasa Leputla

Director: Strategic Communication and Information Services

Cell: 0827286395

***Issued by the Strategic Communication and Information System unit of the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development Communications***