

PRESS RELEASE

(for immediate release)

TEMPORARY BAN OF AUCTIONS AS INTERIM PREVENTION MEASURES FOR SPREADING OF FOOT AND MOUTH DISEASE

"The Red Meat Producers' Organisation (RPO) supports the extremely drastic measures to place a temporary ban on, among other things, auctions and shows of cloven-hoofed animals as announced in the Government Gazette of 4 December 2019," said Mr Koos van der Ryst, Chairman of the national RPO. "These are preventative measures and not punitive measures," said Mr Van der Ryst.

The prevention measures have a drastic impact on commercial and developing producers, as well as the rest of the red meat value chain. 1.2 Million households in South Africa own livestock and are affected by the prevention measures in terms of income and food security. This impacts on the rural economy as well.

It is critically essential that the extent of the outbreak must be determined as a matter of urgency as the authorities and industry work together to ensure this.

"Once the extent of the outbreak has been finalised, the affected area must be immediately isolated and we must return to normal trading practices," said Van der Ryst.

Clearly, additional capacity must be created to deal with the foot-and-mouth outbreak.

The Minister of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development is therefore kindly, but urgently requested, to declare a disaster in order to secure additional capacity and funding to meet the challenges of the disease, as non-compliance will lead to a national disaster.

The time has come for the red meat industry to start positioning itself and it must be realised that the State is not going to provide the solutions alone. The red meat industry therefore also undertakes to generate additional capacity from its own ranks in order to make the prevention and spread of the disease a team effort.

The public/private growth initiative and the five-year master sector plan in the red meat industry will support the initiatives.

The fundamental aspects for the red meat industry in the medium and long term remain extremely positive. The industry is internationally competitive and the widespread rains create hope.

However, we must now invest in the industry and launch extraordinary actions to secure the future of the industry. Proposals for establishing a voluntary traceability system for the cattle industry will be launched in January 2020.

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