

Foot and Mouth Disease: Molemole Outbreak Follow-up Report

27 November 2019

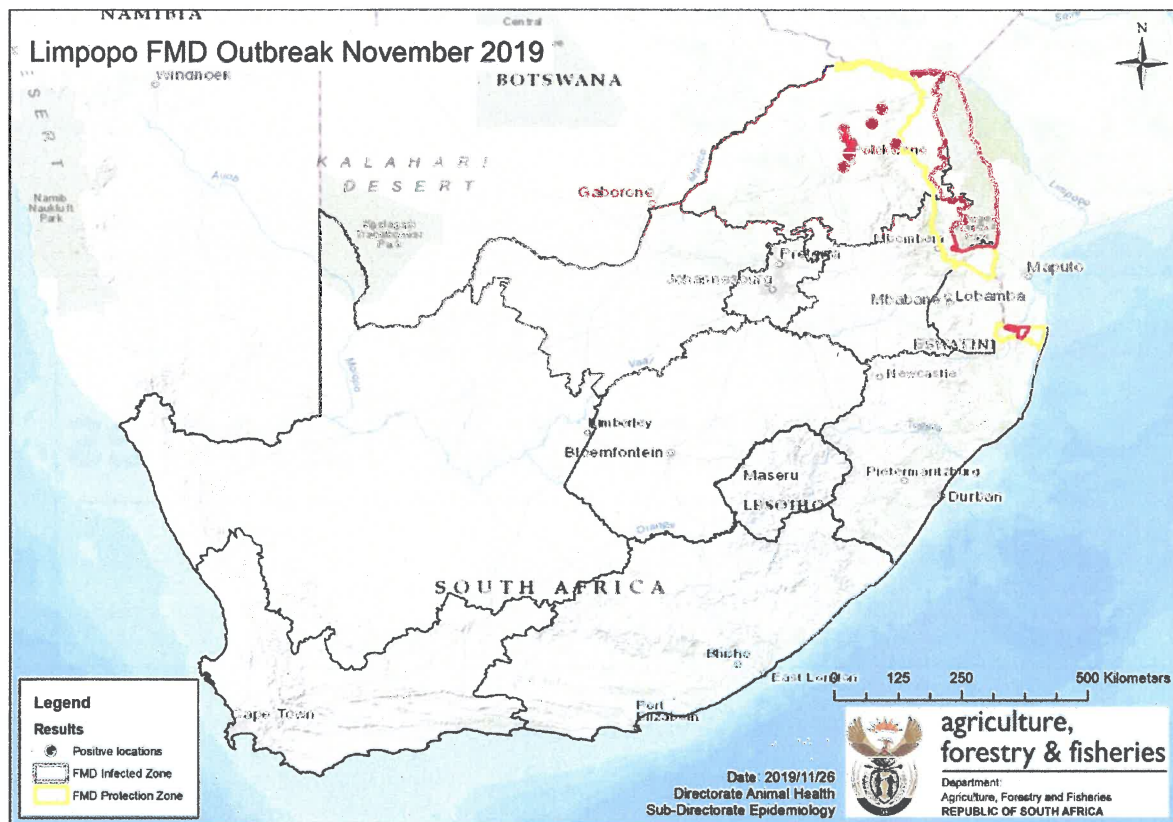


Report compiled by:
Directorate: Animal Health

1. Introduction and summary

In November 2019, an outbreak of Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) was confirmed on a farm in the Capricorn district of Limpopo Province, which is in the suspended FMD free zone. Disease investigations are currently ongoing and the infection has been confirmed in 10 locations. The affected properties include commercial cattle farms, a community farm, feedlots and associated abattoirs. All the positive locations are in Limpopo province. No positive locations have been found in any other province.

Map 1: Location of positive FMD locations in South Africa

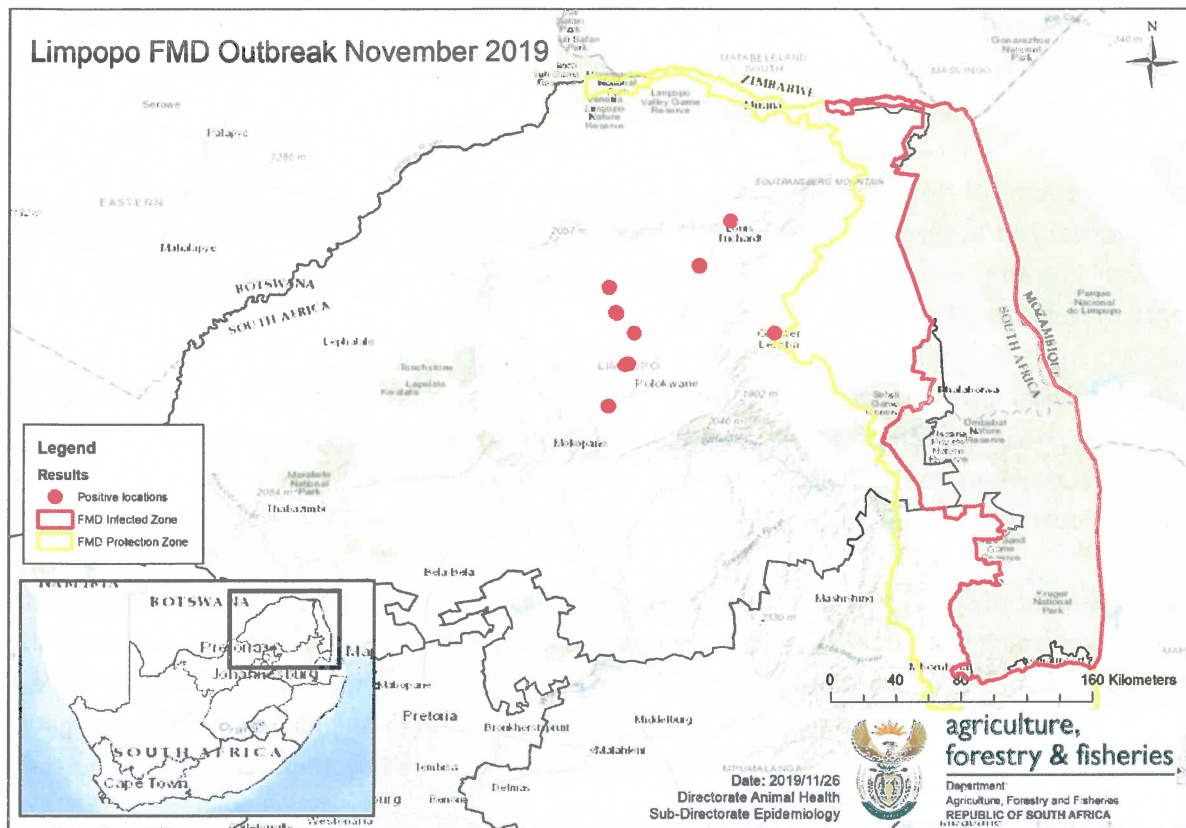


2. Affected locations

On 1 November 2019, an outbreak of FMD was first reported at a commercial farm in Molemole Local Municipality in the Capricorn District of Limpopo province. The infection was confirmed by Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) at Transboundary Animal Disease – Onderstepoort Veterinary Research of the Agricultural Research Council.

To date, the infection has been confirmed on nine (9) commercial properties that include commercial farms, feedlots and associated abattoirs, as well as one (1) community farm. Some locations were identified as a result of reports of clinical signs seen in cattle, while most were identified during trace back and trace forward exercises. All of the locations are either linked directly to auction sales, or to movement from affected farms. Varied clinical signs are seen, with some locations showing almost no clinical signs, some showing only foot lesions, while others show pronounced mouth lesions.

Map 2: FMD positive locations in Limpopo Province



Note related to the map above - Some location are in such close proximity to each other, that they appear as one point on the map above.

3. Control measures implemented

All the infected properties have been placed under quarantine and cloven hoofed animals are not allowed to move off the quarantined properties. Strict biosecurity measures are also in place at all quarantined properties to avoid the spread of disease through indirect contact.

Clinical examination of all cloven hoofed animals on all affected properties is being conducted to determine the prevalence of the disease. The application of emergency vaccination to the in-contact cattle is not considered necessary at this stage.

The congregation and redistribution of cloven hoofed animals from and to more than one location (i.e. auctions, shows, and similar activities) have been identified as playing an integral role in the spread of disease. Livestock owners have been advised to temporarily suspend all such activities in all provinces until the extent of the outbreak has been confirmed. Farmers are encouraged to only move cloven hoofed animals directly from one property to another with the support of a veterinary declaration to confirm the absence of clinical signs of FMD on the premises of origin and in the animals to be moved.

4. Epidemiological investigation

The virus responsible for the outbreak is a SAT 2 serotype and is closely related to the virus responsible for the outbreak that occurred in January 2019, as well as the outbreaks in the FMD protection zone in May and August 2018.

The exact source of this outbreak is yet to be determined and is still being investigated. However, illegal movement of cloven hoofed animals out of the FMD controlled areas could have introduced the virus into the FMD free areas, where-after spreading of the disease occurred through normal (legal) movements of cloven hoofed animals.

Epidemiological investigation is continuing, with backward and forward tracing in process to determine possible origin of the virus, as well as locations to which the disease might have spread. All properties where the infection has been confirmed thus far are well demarcated and fenced-off and have been placed under quarantine.

The movement of susceptible animals through cattle auctions has been identified as a critical factor in initial spreading the infection, with subsequent movements between farms contributing to further spread. Movements of cattle that occurred in the past 3 months on the infected properties as well as others linked to the sources or destinations of the translocated animals are being investigated. Passive surveillance in the rest of the country is being strengthened by emphasizing the importance of reporting suspect cases.

5. Trade implications

Following the loss of the OIE recognised FMD free status in January 2019, agreements were negotiated with trade partners on the export of safe commodities, including heat treated meat and dairy products, deboned and matured beef, scoured wool, salted hides and skins and livestock embryos. Most trade partners have thus far retained the negotiated agreements for these safe commodities, based on the guarantees provided for the processing to ensure inactivation of the virus. South Africa is also confident to certify for the safety of pork products from known FMD free pig compartments.



Director Animal Health

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