

DEPARTMENT OF VETERINARY SERVICES
Weekly Highlights
Week ending 17th October 2019

1. State of animal health

1.1 Foot and mouth disease (FMD)

The latest FMD outbreak at Mkwesine Ranch in Chiredzi North district spread to two more dip tanks one week after the first cases were detected. Control vaccinations were undertaken during the week under review. In the Chiredzi south-western outbreak, 8 cases were reported as the disease continued into the fourth month. Both areas are in the red zone vaccination area and overdue for routine vaccination due to vaccine shortages.

The rest of the country remained calm. Monitoring and surveillance for FMD continued throughout the country.

Drought continued to take a toll on the national herd as a total of 1167 cattle deaths and 35 donkeys were reported in four provinces. A total of 240 cattle deaths were reported in Midlands province; Matabeleland South recorded 291 deaths; Matabeleland North, 218 deaths whilst Masvingo province reported 418 cattle and 35 donkeys deaths. Inadequate grazing led to illegal movements and straying of animals in search of grazing and watering and this resulted in the mixing of susceptible animals with infected animals thereby spreading FMD to new areas.

Six buffaloes were sighted at the interface along Chirisa safari area in Gokwe South district around Marambasimbe dip tank putting 2917 cattle at risk of a foot and mouth disease outbreak. The national parks rangers were notified and they had begun tracking them. Meanwhile work on the

Gonarezhou foot and mouth disease control fence progressed well with 72km having been electrified.

1.2 African swine fever

No deaths were reported from Mt Darwin and the checkpoint remained operational as surveillance continued in the quarantined district.

1.3 Zoonotic diseases

Rabies

One cow was reported from Gwanda district, three dogs from Masvingo province, one dog from Binga district.

One human rabies case was reported this week from Bikita District in Masvingo Province.

Mass dog vaccination campaigns continued in Bulawayo city with 1477 dogs vaccinated. The campaign is one of the three sites supported under the rabies short term plan in partnership with the OIE.

Anthrax

Human cases continued to be reported in Gokwe North and South following anthrax outbreaks reported this month. A total of six human anthrax cases were reported this week. The cases were reported from Hurungwe District (2) in Mashonaland West Province, Gokwe North District (3) and Gokwe South District (1) in Midlands Province. Joint awareness campaigns are on-going and 9756 cattle were vaccinated as follows; Gokwe South (241) and Gokwe North (9515).

1.4 Dipping and tick-borne diseases

Dip chemical supplies remained a challenge throughout the country as tick-borne diseases, especially theileriosis continued to kill cattle.

As the rain season approaches and there is an urgent need to avail dip chemicals to the national dipping programme to avoid hundreds of thousands of cattle dying from tick-borne diseases. The table below shows the number and value (in USD) of cattle that have died due to the tick-borne disease scourge, and the projected cattle deaths during the 2019/20 season.

Number of Cattle deaths from Theileriosis (January Disease)

Year	No of Cattle Deaths	Value in USD\$
2017	50 221	40 176 800
2018	120 554	96 443 200
2019	201 100	160 880 000
2020	(Projected) 300 000	(Projected) 240 000 000
Total	671 875	\$537 500 000

Tick-borne diseases are capable of decimating the national herd as was the case in 1978/79 when over 1 million cattle died as a result the disruption of the national dipping services towards the end of the war of liberation.

If foreign currency is not urgently made available to dip chemical manufacturing companies for the procurement of raw materials needed in the production of the acaricides.

There will a national tragedy as more than 300 000 cattle are projected to die during the 2019/2020 season. Cattle are the productive assets for the farmers and their livelihoods are under serious threat from the tick-borne diseases scourge.