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NOKO MASIPA, MP
DA MEMBER ON THE PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE, LAND REFORM & RURAL DEVELOPMENT

11 November 2019

Thoko Didiza
Minister of Agriculture, Land Reform & Rural Development
Per e-mail:

Dear Minister, Thoko Didiza,

Request for urgent update on 10-year delayed Foot-and-Mouth Disease Facility following recent outbreak in Limpopo.

I am writing to you seeking urgent intervention regarding Foot-and-Mouth Disease (FMD) and the lack of capacity of Agricultural Research Council (ARC). The Democratic Alliance (DA) is concerned by the failure of ARC to carry out its institutional mandate effectively. During ARC's appearance before the Parliamentary Committee it became apparent that the institution is not able to carry out its mandate effectively.

ARC received R188 million to commission an FMD Facility which was aimed at combating the disease through the development of new vaccines. The building of the facility was supposed to have started in 2010 and completed in 2015/2016. This did not happen, and the Auditor-General raised this matter during the 2018/2019 financial report.

It is for this reason that I am also writing to you to seek an update on when this facility will be completed in light of the dysfunctionality of the organization.

Last week, Limpopo saw yet another case of FMD being reported in the Molelmo district - outside the FMD zone. This was the third reported case since an end of the initial outbreak was declared in May 2019.

I am of the view that you should urgently conduct a full investigation regarding the constant outbreak of FMD in Limpopo. This investigation should also include action plans to ensure that South Africa's biosecurity is up to date in order to prevent a further outbreak of disease among livestock.

The DA further calls on you to report on the vaccination programme against FMD and to ensure that the fencing allocation budget from the previous financial year, which was not used, is used to combat any further FMD outbreak.

I look forward to your favourable response.

Yours sincerely,
Noko Masipa (MP)
DA Member on the Portfolio Committee of Agriculture, Land Reform & Rural Development

(sent electronically without signature)