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NOKO MASIPA, MP
DA SHADOW MINISTER - AGRICULTURE, LAND REFORM & RURAL DEVELOPMENT

19 August 2022

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

Dear Minister Thoko Didiza

Request for multiparty forum engagement regarding Foot and Mouth Disease.

Foot and Mouth Disease is continuing to spread across the country. Currently, there are 116 outbreaks in six of the nine provinces, and many provinces have experienced more than one outbreak. The number of foot and mouth disease outbreaks is too high and requires detailed attention. Furthermore, the institutions assigned by law to deal with the challenges are failing.

Whilst most, if not all, commercial farmers and feedlots have fenced farms, most of the communal farmers in rural villages don't have fences. Communal farmers lament poor vaccination support in the controlled zones in villages. Livestock in rural areas roams the streets and the roads. No biosecurity is in place to safeguard against the spread of foot and mouth disease. Furthermore, these communal farmers experience a high rate of stolen livestock because of lack of fencing. The country lack animal traceability mechanisms – it's impossible to determine whether these stolen animals end in the feedlots or in the FMD free zone. My investigations further revealed that these communal farmers and community leaders were not consulted or involved in the foot and mouth disease solutions-seeking process. They only heard about the plans through the media reports.

Minister, over the last two years, you engaged the industry to find solutions and agreed on certain measures. To date, there has been a failure to hold a multiparty forum engagement to get views from opposition parties spokespersons to hear their solutions. The Democratic Alliance is not taking the outbreak of foot and mouth disease lightly because it has a devastating economic impact, especially for the feedlot during the 21 days of hard lockdown and the emerging farmers who relies on their livestock to support their families.

Minister, the Democratic Alliance calls on you to convene a multiparty forum to exchange ideas in finding solutions to curb the spread of the disease. This engagement will also allow you to share with the multiparty forum your plans in dealing with foot and mouth disease.

Yours sincerely,
Noko Masipa (MP)
DA Member on the Portfolio Committee of Agriculture, Land Reform & Rural Development
(sent electronically without signature)