

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT
ON THE
OUTBREAK OF FOOT AND MOUTH DISEASE IN CHISAMBA AND CHIBOMBO
DISTRICTS
BY THE HON. MINISTER OF LIVESTOCK AND FISHERIES, MS MULENGA, MP

Mr Speaker, I rise to provide an update on the status of the Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) outbreak in cattle that broke out in Chisamba and Chibombo Districts of Central Province.

Sir, the suspected outbreak of FMD was first reported to my ministry in March, 2018 by one of the dairy farmers in Chisamba District who observed unusual drooling of saliva from the mouth. An outbreak investigation was then conducted by a team of experts from my ministry who in addition to physical and clinical examination of the animals, collected blood and tissue samples. FMD was then confirmed by the Central Veterinary Research Institute (CVRI) through serology and Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR). The tissue samples were then sent to International Reference laboratories in Botswana and the United Kingdom for stereotyping or strain characterisation and vaccine matching as Zambia has no facilities to present or undertake this work. In addition, further investigations were carried out to determine the extent of the spread of the disease. Active surveillance was carried out and more effected farms were added to the list. It was noted that Chibombo District was also exposed.

Mr Speaker, my ministry made two press statements, the first being on 27th March, 2018 to inform the nation of the outbreak and emergency measures that were put up. The second was on 13th April, 2018 where the ministry announced FMD serotype 'O' as a cause of the outbreak and additional measures that were instituted. These measures included the following:

- (i) livestock movement restrictions;
- (ii) disease surveillance awareness and extension services;

- (iii) ban of slaughter of cattle, pigs, goat, sheep and wildlife at abattoirs unless under a prescribed protocol;
- (iv) ban on the sale of raw milk from the infected farm . All the raw milk was pasteurised before being sold;
- (v) the setting up of bio-security check points at strategic points with support from the local taskforce comprising the District Commissioner, farmers and other stakeholders.
- (vi) the intensification of surveillance and inspection of farms to ascertain the presence or absence of the disease; and
- (vii) vaccination of animals against Foot and Mouth Disease in the affected areas.

Mr Speaker, the first emergency vaccination covered 31,500 cattle that was the population at risk while the booster vaccination that we have just completed covered 61,000 cattle. The ministry will further undertake six monthly vaccinations of cattle against FMD in these areas in an effort to eradicate the disease through vaccination. My ministry is also undertaking vaccination of cattle against FMD in the known FMD high risk or endemic areas of Kafue Flats, lower Zambezi from Livingstone to Sioma and the Mbala/ Isoka areas at great cost to the Government as the FMD vaccine is expensive. So far, over K10 million has been spent for FMD vaccination countrywide.

Mr Speaker, the above measures were done in pursuant of the Animal Health Act No. 27 of 2010 of the Laws of Zambia and were intended to guard against the spread of the disease to other areas of the country as well as to curb the effect on the disease on production and productivity and marketing of livestock and their products. The measures also demonstrated the great resolve of the Patriotic Front (PF) Government of His Excellency, Mr Edgar Chagwa Lungu to diversify the economy through agriculture by controlling animal diseases that constrain production and productivity. The sum total of these interventions will contribute to food security, income

generation, poverty reduction and socio-economic development in line with the Seventh National Development Plan (7NDP) and the vision 2030.

Mr Speaker, regarding the source of the FMD outbreak in Chisamba and Chibombo districts, laboratory analysis from both accredited international reference laboratories in Botswana and the United Kingdom (U K) identified FMD S tereotype 'O' as a cause of the outbreak. It must be appreciated that FMD S tereotype O virus is maintained and spread by cattle and has ever been isolated from the buffalo. It must also be noted that Zambia has two FMD epidemiological fo rms and these are as follows:

- (a) The first form involves Sat 1, Sat 2 and S at 3 that is maintained and spread by the wild buffalo and found in the Kafue Fl ats and the lower Zambezi (from Livingstone to Sioma);
- (b) The second form involves Stereotype 'O' and 'A' with incursions of Sat 1 and Sat 2 found in Northern Zambia (Mbala and Isoka). This is maintained and spread by cattle.

Sir, since 1976, when Stereotype 'O' was first isolated in Zambia, it has been confined to Mbala and Isoka areas. The S tereotype is known to spread from East Africa into Northern Zambia as a result of movement of infected cattle across the porous border without any movement of wild buffalo. Investigations have indicated that S tereotype 'O' was spread into central Zambia through the movement of infected cattle from the Northern Zambia, where an outbreak of FMD Stereotype 'O' was on-going.

Mr Speaker, the ministry has since intensified the construction of check -points along the Great North Road to curb the vice which is becoming rampant. My ministry will next week, 5th of July, 2018, lift the ban on measures that were instituted as the outbreak has been contained. This exercise has been a success as the response from the farmers is overwhelmingly good.

Sir, we would like to thank all the farmers, other partners and the general public for their cooperation and support. Let me end by thanking you, Mr Speaker, for allowing me to render my statement to this august House.

I thank you, Mr Speaker.