

## **MINISTERIAL STATEMENT**

ON

STATUS OF FOOT AND MOUTH DISEASE COUNTRYWIDE

BY

THE MINISTER OF FISHERIES AND LIVESTOCK, MS MULENGA, MP

Madam Speaker, I wish to thank you and the Leader of Government Business in the House, Her Honour the Vice-President, for giving me this opportunity to render a ministerial statement to update this august House and, indeed, the nation on the status of the foot and mouth disease (FMD) in the country and the measures taken so far to control the disease. This statement will also address the concern of the general public on this disease of socio-economic importance to the country.

Madam Speaker, I wish to inform the House that there is an ongoing outbreak of FMD in the country. The House may wish to note that the first case was reported on 22<sup>nd</sup> March, 2018, in Chisamba District and the disease was reported on fourteen farms. Later in the same month, the disease spread to Chibombo District. Experts from my ministry conducted laboratory diagnosis and confirmed the disease to be FMD caused by FMD virus serotype '0' which was closely related to that isolated in Eastern Africa. This was the first time this particular virus was isolated and identified in the Central Zambia. Previously, FMD control programmes in the country were targeted at the FMD serotype SAT 1, SAT 2 and SAT 3. For this reason, the livestock population in the affected districts were highly naive, since they have never been exposed, to this new serotype and they had no previous vaccinations.

Madam, allow me now to dwell on FMD symptoms and risk factors. FMD is a highly infectious and devastating trans-boundary viral disease of livestock that impedes trade in livestock and livestock products. FMD does not cause diseases in humans, but has devastating socio-economic effects. It is a notifiable disease that has to be reported to the nearest veterinary office and the World Organisation for Animal Health when it occurs. FMD causes painful sores and blisters on the feet, mouth and teats of animals leading to lameness and salivation. Infected cattle are

depressed, reluctant to move and unwilling or unable to eat, which can lead to decreased milk production, weight loss and poor growth. Ultimately, there is loss of production and productivity.

Madam Speaker, the disease is spread by direct contact, such as when a healthy animal touches, rubs or licks an animal that is sick. The virus may also spread by air or wind depending on the environmental temperature and humidity. Animals may also become infected from eating contaminated feed or by contact with contaminated objects such as farm equipment. FMD can be carried on clothes, shoes, vehicles and even in the nasal passage of people that have had contact with infected animals. The animals that are at risk include cattle, goats, pigs and other animals with split hooves.

Madam Speaker, in February, 2019, the disease was reported in Monze District of the Southern Province after a herd of eighteen cattle were moved from Chisamba to Monze District. This movement was fraudulent and the erring officers have since been suspended awaiting dismissal. After introduction into the Southern Province, the disease later spread to Mazabuka, Pemba, Namwala and Choma. The latest outbreak situation in the country is as follows:

- (a) one farm in Nalubanda Veterinary Camp of Mumbwa District;
- (b) one farm in Chilanga District;
- (c) one farm in Kanyama of Lusaka District;
- (d) two farms in Kapiri Mposhi District;
- (e) three farms in Kabwe District;
- (f) one farm in Chingola District; and
- (g) one farm in Kafue District.

The disease has been worsened by illegal movement of animals and animal contacts at communal watering and grazing points.

Madam Speaker, let me also address the measures put in place by the Government to control this disease. My ministry, through the Department of Veterinary Services, is actively instituting the following measures:

## SURVEILLANCE AND DISEASE IDENTIFICATION

My officers are on the ground carrying out active searches of the disease on farms and communal areas. Districts neighbouring FMD affected areas have been placed on high alert and are taking measures to prevent disease occurrence.

## MOVEMENT CONTROL

All the affected areas have been placed under quarantine and issuance of livestock movement permits suspended.

## SENSITISATION OF FARMERS AND OTHER KEY STAKEHOLDERS

My ministry is working with other key stakeholders in sensitising the farmers and the general public on FMD. Among the methods being used are:

- (a) packaged FMD messages on the community radio stations;
- (b) community meetings;
- (c) use of FMD leaflets; and
- (d) use of traditional and civic leaders, among others.

## STEPPING UP BIO-SECURITY MEASURES IN AND OUT OF THE AFFECTED AREAS

Bio-security check points in the affected areas have been set up at strategic points. These are being operated in conjunction with other stakeholders. On-farm bio security in affected areas is also being enforced.

## MASS VACCINATION CAMPAIGNS AGAINST FMD IN HIGH RISK AREAS

The following is the update on the vaccinations conducted so far in four provinces:

### *Central Province*

Madam Speaker, the rounds of FMD vaccination have been done in Chisamba and Chibombo Districts of the Central Province. A total of 200,000 doses of FMD vaccines were used to vaccinate 200,000 cattle at a cost of K10.8 million to the Government. This together with other measures such as the setting up of bio-security checkpoints, among others, has resulted in the disease in the two districts being put under control as no further cases have been reported since March, 2019.

### *Southern Province*

My ministry has conducted two rounds of FMD vaccinations in cattle. The first round of vaccination in Monze covered 100,000 cattle while the booster vaccinations covered 210,000 cattle in Mazabuka, Monze, Pemba, Choma and Namwala Districts. Vaccinations were also conducted in Itzhi-tezhi, Mumbwa and Shibuyunji Districts of the Central Province to create a buffer around the Kafue Flats where cattle migrate for grazing during the dry season. The FMD vaccines for the two rounds have cost the Government K13.6 million. My ministry is closely monitoring the situation in the Southern Province to ensure that the disease is resolved as soon as possible.

### *Eastern Province*

Madam Speaker, the disease was reported in Vubwi and Lundazi along the border with Malawi. The FMD virus isolated in the outbreak was serotype SAT 2. In response, my ministry set up checkpoints to curb spread of the disease to other areas and conducted farmers and stakeholders sensitization, among other measures. My ministry has provided 78,200 FMD vaccines for the two rounds at a cost of K1.5 million to the Government. The first round of FMD vaccinations in cattle has already been completed.

*Northern Province*

Madam Speaker, the House may wish to note that Mbala District has continued to be on high alert since 2015 because of the threat of FMD from East Africa. My ministry dispatched 30,000 doses of FMD vaccines to Mbala District to conduct vaccination so as to create a buffer zone along the border. The FMD vaccines of the two rounds have cost the Government K1.6 million.

Madam Speaker, in terms of costs, the Government has so far spent K27.5 million and the stakeholders have contributed about K110, 000 towards the control of the disease. The Government attaches great importance to the development of the livestock industry and everything possible is being done to put the disease under control.

Madam, my ministry has engaged key stakeholders in the implementation of control measures in order to bring the disease under control. May I take this opportunity to caution and warn all those involved in illegal movement of animals that the Government will not take kindly to such illegal activities and will not hesitate to apply the law under the Animal Health Act No. 27 of 2010.

I, therefore, wish to appeal to livestock farmers and traders to comply with the measures being put in place by my ministry, especially the movement restrictions imposed in the affected areas to prevent the disease from spreading to disease free areas. I also appeal to my fellow hon. Members of Parliament to help in sensitising their constituents on the disease and participate actively in the implementation of control measures.

Madam, in conclusion, may I take this opportunity to thank His Excellency the President of the Republic of Zambia, Mr Edgar Chagwa Lungu, for the support given to my ministry towards the control of the disease. Further, I wish to extend my gratitude to all co-operating partners, stakeholders and farmers for their co-operation as we work together in bringing this disease under control. Yes, together, we can.

Madam Speaker, I thank you.