



agriculture, forestry & fisheries

Department:
Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries
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Media release

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RIFT VALLEY FEVER IN MOSSEL BAY

PRETORIA: The Western Cape Provincial Veterinary Services has reported a case of Rift Valley fever at Grootbrakrivier, near Mossel Bay. This is the first report of this disease for 2011, and the first occurrence of the disease since the large outbreak that occurred during 2010, which ended in August 2010. Last year, 26 people and more than 8500 animals, died from this disease. Vaccination of animals could have reduced this loss of life!

The South African Veterinary Services is very concerned about a return of the disease during the rainy season of 2011. The widespread rainfall experienced during January 2011 could trigger further occurrence of the disease. Farmers are strongly advised to ensure that their animals are vaccinated against the disease and to be on the lookout for signs of the disease. The disease affects sheep, goats, cattle and some wildlife species.

Rift Valley fever is a viral disease in animals that is spread by mosquitoes. It causes abortions in sheep, goats and cattle and can cause death in young animals. Humans can get infected if they come into contact with blood and other body fluids from infected animals, or if they assist with abortions and handle infectious aborted material, like foetuses, placentas and placental fluids. Humans may also contract Rift Valley Fever during the slaughtering of infected animals and through the handling of carcasses and meat of recently slaughtered infected animals. Meat from any sick animal should not be handled or eaten. People, who are at risk of coming into contact with the

blood of infected or possibly infected animals, must wear protective clothing, like masks, spectacles and gloves.

All suspected cases of the disease in animals must be reported to the local State Veterinarian. People, who suspect that they might have become infected with Rift Valley Fever, must consult a medical doctor.

For more information, contact:

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