**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**WRITTEN REPLY**

**QUESTION 1419**

**INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER [No 15-2023 SIXTH PARLIAMENT]
DATE OF PUBLICATION: 5 MAY 2023**

**1419. Mr N P Masipa (DA) to ask the Minister of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development:**

What (a) are the reasons that the Foot and Mouth Disease vaccines could not be produced at Onderstepoort Biological Products, resulting in these vaccines having to be procured from the Republic of Botswana instead and (b) total cost did the Government incur for the procurement of the specified vaccines from Botswana?  **NW1506E**

**THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE, LAND REFORM AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT:**

1. The Onderstepoort Biological Products OBP) was never expected to produce Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) vaccine. It has never produced FMD vaccines. This is owing to the fact that the disease is classified as a trans- boundary animal disease which is very infectious, and its vaccine should be produced under very strict biosecurity environment. The laboratory capability at the OBP is therefore not suitable for production of this vaccine.

For some years, ARC had been experiencing budgetary constraints, which got exacerbated by dilapidating and aging equipment and infrastructure. Owing to budgetary constraints, the ARC could not retain expertise that brain drained to competing industries. This has resulted in the Department importing vaccine from a suitable facility in Botswana.

1. Government spent R78 286 339 during financial year ending 31 March 2023 in procuring the vaccine from Botswana through the OBP (SOC) Ltd.