**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**WRITTEN REPLY**

**QUESTION 1962**

**INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER [No 19-2023 SIXTH PARLIAMENT]
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**1962. Ms T Breedt (FF Plus) to ask the Minister of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development:**

1. What is the current status and severity of the African swine fever (ASF) outbreak;
2. what are the statistics of the ASF outbreak;
3. whether there are currently any safety protocols in place to control the ASF outbreak; if not, what are the implications of the the absence of safety protocols; if so, (a) what are the safety protocols and (b) how are they monitored;

(4) whether there are currently any apparent wide-ranging efforts to hide and/or underreport the outbreak of ASF; if not, what is the position in this regard; if so, what plans are in place to deal with the outbreak? **NW2213E**

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

1. African Swine Fever (ASF) historically only occurred in the northern parts of Limpopo, Mpumalanga, Gauteng and North West, due to infected ticks carried by warthog that came into contact with domestic pigs. The epidemiology of the disease has changed in the past few years. Outbreaks started to occur in domestic pigs without proof of direct contact with warthog and the disease spread to areas where it was never detected previously. ASF has now been detected in domestic pigs in all provinces.
2. The total number of outbreaks is 110.
* Eastern Cape –25
* Free State–17
* Gauteng–13
* Mpumalanga–12
* North West –6
* Western Cape –35
* KwaZulu-Natal – 2
1. Yes.

1. All properties where ASF is detected are placed under quarantine, with movement control and biosecurity measures put in place. ASF is a controlled and notifiable disease and pig owners are required by law to report any suspicion of ASF.

All suspicions of ASF (including all reported significant increases in pig mortalities) will be investigated by the local state veterinarian and appropriate samples taken for confirmation. While the results of tests are awaited, pre-emptive quarantine will be placed on affected holdings and the focus of this quarantine placement will be to prohibit movement off the farm.

Once the diagnosis is confirmed, quarantine will be confirmed. In addition to placing the affected property under quarantine, the risks for the area must be considered by the local state veterinarian, as well as forward and backward tracing to determine properties possibly at risk and possible sources of infection.

Surveillance activities must be implemented at high-risk properties, by means of clinical inspection and sample collection in the event of any sick or dead pigs. For the prevention of further outbreaks and the spread of ASF, the selling of live pigs at auctions in affected areas may be suspended if deemed necessary to prevent the mixing and distribution of infected pigs.

Movement controls (where movements require certification) and movement restrictions (where movements are not allowed) may be implemented in specified areas, as determined to be required.

Awareness campaigns on biosecurity (safe buying, safekeeping, and safe feeding) and other disease risks will be undertaken jointly with other roleplayers. Awareness is always done in affected areas to advise pig owners on the minimum biosecurity standards that will prevent ASF introduction into their farms.

The various control protocols and specified guidelines assist with infection control and prevention. Recording, analyses and reporting of clinical trials and sample collections assist to determine and monitor the effectiveness of the control protocols.This may be followed by self-audit and protocol adjustment.

(b) Monitoring of all disease control measures is done by the provinces.

1. The Department, together with the South African Pork Producers Organization, constantly issues media statements advising pig owners on biosecurity measures to empower owners to prevent the introduction of the disease onto their properties. Since ASF causes high mortalities in pigs, the disease generally does not go unnoticed. It is not expected or perceived that there are deliberate attempts to underreport ASF, once the disease is diagnosed. However, some farmers have the attitude of selling or slaughtering animals quickly, if they perceive that there might be an infectious disease in their herds. This undesirable behaviour is not limited to pigs and ASF, but applies to all livestock and different diseases.