**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**WRITTEN REPLY**

**QUESTION 2413**

**INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER [No 23-2023 SIXTH PARLIAMENT]
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**2413. Ms C N Mkhonto (EFF) to ask the Minister of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development:**

What (a) are the reasons that communities near the Kruger National Park are permanently referred to as foot-and-mouth disease red zones even though there are no cases reported and (b) support system is offered to the farmers to sell their livestock and products without fear of spreading the disease, in cases where there are reports of the foot-and-mouth disease? **NW2756E**

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

(a) The following zones are in place for Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) control purposes. These zones are not unique to South Africa but is an accepted international way to deal with zones of different FMD risk in a country.

* The FMD Infected Zone, which is the Kruger National Park and adjacent game reserves. This zone is permanently FMD infected, due to the presence of FMD infected buffalo which are permanent carriers of the disease;
* the FMD Protection Zone is the zone adjacent to the Kruger National Park, with mainly communal cattle and small stock farming areas. It is assumed that these are the communities that are referred to in the question above, although the term “red zone” is not used officially or internationally; and
* the FMD Free Zone is the rest of the country, although this status is currently suspended due to outbreaks that occurred between 2019 and 2022.

The high risk posed by the buffalo in the infected zone is the reason for the permanent protection zone in the adjacent communities. The control approach is multi-layered, to provide for prevention of outbreaks, early detection of outbreaks, and limiting the spread of outbreaks as much as possible. The layers include fencing around the Kruger National Park, routine vaccination of cattle populations in the protection zone adjacent to the fence, regular inspection of all cattle in the protection zone, and movement control for cloven hoofed animals and products out of the protection zone. If the above system of prevention works well, then no outbreaks are reported in the protection zone and the zone serves its purpose well. That is currently the status. Should an outbreak occur in the protection zone, the systems are in already in place to detect the disease quickly and prevent its further spread.

(b) If there are reports of FMD in a specific part of the protection zone, premises with cloven hoofed animals in that area will be placed under quarantine to prevent further spread of the disease. Animals in such areas cannot be moved or marketed until the quarantine has been lifted. Farmers in the protection zone, in areas without active FMD outbreaks, are unfortunately negatively affected by the permanent restrictions placed on the area. Provision is made for moving of unvaccinated animals out of the protection zone. These animals are subject to quarantine and testing prior to movement and government subsidises the payment of some of these tests for non-commercial movements. There is also a drive to promote market access for farmers within the protection zone and government is engaging with a number of stakeholders in this regard.

 Work on supporting the development of a system to improve market access for producers in FMD high risk areas as part of efforts to reduce the risk of live cattle movements to markets in areas of low risk including the previously WOAH-recognized FMD free zone without vaccination has been proposed. This work involves the setting up of feedlots and quarantine camps to support this activity particularly for animals intended for slaughter.