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MEDIA STATEMENT

21 January 2026

Minister Steenhuisen appoints Industry Coordination Council to strengthen FMD response

Following last week's announcement of South Africa's national strategy to contain and control Foot and mouth disease (FMD), Minister of Agriculture Mr John Steenhuisen has formally appointed the FMD Industry Coordination Council to support its implementation.

This council has been established to ensure that industry plays an active, coordinated role in supporting the phased rollout of the FMD strategy, including vaccine distribution, traceability and disease control readiness.

"I am fully committed to doing whatever it takes to beat FMD. This council will engage directly with me, and its input will be taken seriously. Government cannot do this alone; we need the full strength of the private sector, farmers and veterinarians collaborating with us. We now have a roadmap, and I am accountable for its delivery. If we stay focused and work together, I believe we can restore FMD-free status in less than ten years," said Minister Steenhuisen.

The council will form one part of a triangular partnership essential to delivering on the FMD response:

- The Department of Agriculture – responsible for policy, regulatory support and resourcing.
- The Technical and Scientific Task Team – offering scientific, veterinary and epidemiological expertise.

- The FMD Industry Coordination Council – providing operational insight, strategic guidance and unified industry input.

To ensure a coordinated approach with industry, the minister issued a directive assigning the council the role of aligning industry efforts with national FMD control measures.

This includes establishing and operating an industry coordination mechanism to mobilise sector actions; consolidating industry situational information; coordinating industry communication; supporting implementation readiness for traceability and audit-ready record-keeping required for movement compliance and compartmentalised operations; and facilitating non-statutory logistics, including training, awareness and implementation monitoring.

The council will engage regularly with both the department and the Technical and Scientific Task Team to ensure alignment between policy, implementation and veterinary oversight.

Council Members

Through their service on the council, they have committed to a collective outcome that serves both the industry and the national interest. Constructive and realistic inputs may be directed to these representatives for consideration.

- Johann Kotzé
- Bennie van Zyl
- Theo Boshoff
- Frikkie Maré
- Fanie Ferreira
- Marlene Louw
- Bongani Msimang
- Kobus Bester
- Dewald Olivier

The representation ensures that decisions are informed by real-world insights across the industry value chain.

Ongoing Coordination

The council will begin its work this week, with the first formal meeting scheduled for Wednesday, 21 January 2026, focusing on aligning priorities and consolidating industry input. Weekly engagements will follow to maintain momentum, support structured monitoring and ensure consistent progress. These meetings will strengthen the council's ability to present coherent, unified recommendations to Government and the Technical and Scientific Task Team.

The council has already requested an urgent meeting with the Technical and Scientific Task Team to review the national plan and ensure alignment of operational capacity across industry and government structures. This engagement is essential to refining the roadmap before implementation intensifies.

The council welcomes the minister's commitment and willingness to work closely with industry. This engagement reflects a coordinated, accountable and technically informed approach to implementation. With aligned structures, consistent communication, and disciplined collaboration, South Africa is better positioned to restore its FMD-free status and strengthen the resilience of the livestock sector.

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