



LIMPOPO
PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

**DEPARTMENT OF
AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT**

MEDIA ALERT

TO ALL MEDIA

18 DECEMBER 2023

**PUBLIC ALERT ON HIGH-RISK RABIES AT CERTAIN AREAS IN LIMPOPO
DURING HOLIDAY SEASON**

The MEC for the Limpopo Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (LDARD) would like to issue a rabies alert to the locals and people travelling to high-risk areas this festive season. The Department encourages the public to rather report stray animals to local welfare authorities and to support these organisations in caring for such animals. Remember that rabies may occur anywhere in South Africa and therefore avoid the handling of animals that you do not know.

Rabies is endemic in South Africa and the Limpopo Province is one of the high-risk focal areas with the Mopani and Vhembe district being of great concern to the LDARD.

One dog has already tested positive for rabies this month in Makhado Local Municipality. If human contact is suspected, be advised to visit a local clinic. LDARD assures the community that plans are in place to vaccinate dogs within the 10km radius. This is for the protection of pets and family.

Pets owners should take ownership and responsibility by ensuring that their pets get vaccination against rabies, as required by law. Dogs must be vaccinated from the age of three (3) months and thereafter, annually to effectively prevent rabies. Vaccination is free and accessible to various LDARD local state veterinarian, animal health technician, private veterinarian, or animal welfare organization.

The LDARD will embark on mass dog vaccination in the high-risk areas during the last quarter of 2023/24. The strategy to eliminate dog-mediated human rabies by 2030 was adopted by the minister of the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development. It is based on the Global Framework for the Elimination of Dog Mediated Human Rabies ("Zero by 30" strategy) developed jointly by the World Health Organisation (WHO), the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE), and the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO) in Geneva in 2015.

Rabies is a 100% vaccine-preventable viral disease that occurs in more than 150 countries and territories. It is a zoonotic disease (transmitted between animals and humans) that is spread via saliva. This usually occurs via a bite wound inflicted by an infected animal, although scratches and even licks pose a risk.

Rabies affects the central nervous system, and the main clinical sign is a change in behaviour in both animals and humans. Rabies can be effectively controlled by mass vaccination of dogs. At least 70% of the dog population must be vaccinated. Once bitten by a rabies-suspect animal the following must be done to prevent the transmission of rabies to humans:

1. Thoroughly wash the wound with water and soap.
2. Visit your nearest clinic to receive anti-rabies vaccine and treatment of the wound.

The LDARD is in collaboration with the Limpopo Department of Health, local government authorities, tribal authorities, LEDET, Security cluster, and other relevant stakeholders in a multi-sectoral collaboration and One Health approach to achieve optimal prevention of rabies and other diseases that affect both man and animals.

For any queries related to animal health please do not hesitate to contact:

Capricorn District – Dr. Mashigo-Sepale – 0609782317

Mopani District – Dr. Mashau V – 0660794201

Sekhukhune District - Dr. Makgamatha MF – 0716041885

Vhembe District – Dr. Rhangani – 0660794597

Waterberg District – Dr. Letsoalo KV – 0716044084

For the Limpopo Department of Health, the district Communicable Diseases Coordinator are the following:

Capricorn – Mawasha F - 0824970642

Mopani – Mayimele N - 0716094169

Sekhukhune – Mokomane D – 0739834589

Vhembe – Dr Malwela - 0727026916

Waterberg – Mahoai A - 0739905479

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For media enquiries or interviews, please contact Media Liaison Officer Mr. Simon Ramafalo 082 367 2712

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