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OIE Renews South Africa's FMD-Free Status

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Report Highlights:

The International Animal Health Organization (OIE) notified the South African Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fishery (DAFF) on February 14, 2014, that South Africa's status of a Food and Mouth (FMD) free zone where vaccination is not practiced was formally reinstated. As a result, the South African Department of Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries (DAFF), Directorate for Import and Export of Animal Products, has begun seeking renewed market access for livestock products affected by the 2011 FMD outbreak.

General Information:

The International Animal Health Organization (OIE) notified the South African Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fishery (DAFF) on February 14, 2014, that South Africa's status of a Food and Mouth (FMD) free zone where vaccination is not practiced was formally reinstated. The OIE will send an expert mission by the end of 2014 to verify that certain prescriptive measures have been fully implemented in the FMD control areas of the Limpopo, Mpumalanga and Kwazulu-Natal provinces. The South African Department of Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries (DAFF), Directorate for Import and Export of Animal Products, has begun seeking renewed market access for livestock products affected by the 2011 FMD outbreak. Despite the OIE inspection taking place later in 2014, DAFF will continue to seek renewed market access based off the February 14 FMD free determination.

The outbreak of FMD occurred in February 2011 in Kwazulu-Natal, and immediately South Africa's trading partners imposed various restrictions for the highly contagious disease affecting cloven-hoofed animals, such as cattle, goats and sheep, and their unprocessed products. The European Union also banned the imports of game meat from South Africa. Before the outbreak, South Africa was exporting more than 13,000 tons of fresh red meat worth US\$93 million (see Figure 1), with almost 70 percent destined for the European Union. The exports of red meat dropped to 7,000 tons or US\$34 million in 2012, with countries in Africa, such as Mozambique, Angola, Zimbabwe, Zambia and Congo replacing the European Union as the primary destinations

According to recent media on the FMD situation, media sources report the annual loss in exports since South Africa lost its FMD status amounted to R4 billion (US\$360 million) per annum. However, Post could not verify this figure from global trade data.

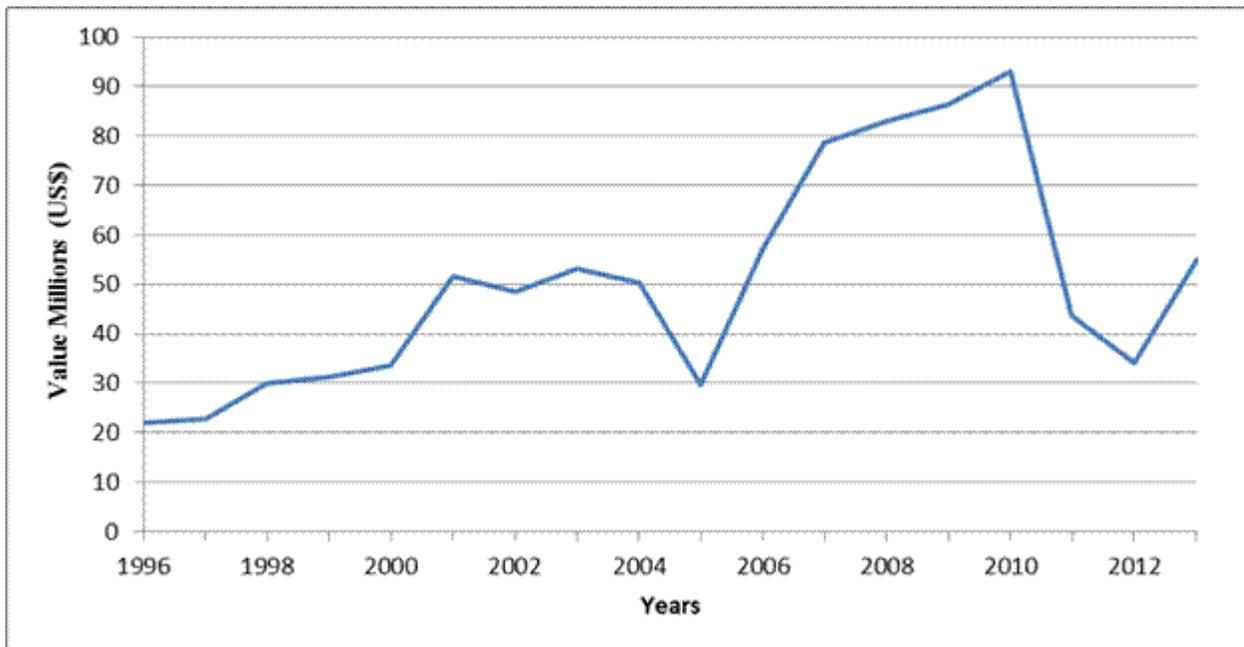


Figure 1: South Africa's exports of red meat (fresh, chilled or frozen) since 1996

Industry organizations including the Red Meat Producers Organization and the National Wool Growers Association congratulated and thanked DAFF for their efforts and reassurance that the South Africa Government is serious about protecting the industry and implementing biosecurity measures to safeguard the national herds and flocks. The National Wool Growers Association mentioned that “the export of South Africa's wool to various export destinations such as China, India, Czech Republic and the European Union were under constant threat after South Africa lost its FMD-free status. Now this is all in the past and the livestock industry must work closely with DAFF to ensure that future outbreaks are prevented at all cost.”

The next steps for South Africa will be to engage trading partners in technical market access discussions, including the European Union, before red meat exports can resume, as reinstating the FMD-free status had no bearing on whether individual countries or trade blocks rescind import meat bans. South Africa also plans to deploy 27 fully-equipped mobile clinics to expand veterinary services and use uniquely coded tags to track and trace every animal in FMD areas, all part of DAFF’s plan to remain FMD-free in the future.