



LIMPOPO

PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

POLICY ON ECTOPARASITE CONTROL

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Recommended by:

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Date

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1. Acronyms and abbreviations

FMD	Foot and Mouth Disease
LDA	Limpopo Department of Agriculture
MEC	Member of the Executive Council
HOD	Head of Department
CASP	Comprehensive Agricultural Support Programme
RSA	Republic of South Africa

2. Executive summary

The policy on ectoparasite control aims at addressing all matters regarding the dipping of animals. It investigates the advantages of dipping, the consequences of non-dipping, the benefits for the farmers as well as the Department and the financial implications of dipping with regards to the Department.

3. Introduction

The Historical Situation:

In the past the government provided a dipping service, which included provision of dipping compound, maintenance of dipping facilities and personnel to dip animals in communal areas. Due to financial constraints, this service was then restricted to the Foot and Mouth Disease control area. There were many requests for extension of the service to other areas, but the limiting factor was the funding thereof.

Various initiatives were made by farmers, but in most cases, the service was ineffective due to usage of cheap, improper compounds or weak concentrations where the compound was the correct one. Many animals actually died from poisoning in some cases.

This shows that owners do have the will to dip their animals, with the limiting factors being affordability or failure to fully appreciate the benefits of dipping e.g. selling of some animals to buy dip-stuff to care for the others, ensuring good quality thereof.

In the Foot and Mouth Disease protection zone adjacent to the Kruger National Park, it is of utmost importance to inspect cattle weekly for symptoms of the disease. The above areas are also heavily infected with various species of ticks and other external parasites. A dipping service is necessary to lure the cattle owners to the inspection points, primarily to inspect the animals but also to give a tick control service back to the owners for their co-operation and efforts. Communities in the buffer zone adjacent to buffalo or where roaming buffalo may occur are also exposed to Corridor disease in cattle and regular dipping kills the brown ear tick which is the main vector.

Ticks also cause a host of other diseases which cause tremendous losses to communal farmers.

The advantages of dipping should be indicated in line with the Departmental goals of ensuring food security and eradicating poverty. Healthy livestock will go a long way in promoting these ideals. The importance of cattle in providing milk, meat and other products as well as draught power cannot be overemphasised. Generation of revenue through livestock sales had seen many needy families thrive and escaping from the poverty trap.

Many unemployed people are actually sustained by benefits from livestock.

Dipping ensures good animal health, obviating spending on costly drugs to treat tick-borne diseases and promotion of good udder health.

Presently the LDA funds dipping which is coupled with inspection of animals for controlled animal diseases. Animal owners are encouraged to purchase their own dipping compounds to supplement the service while the provincial government is providing the facilities and the technical skills and also maintain the facilities.

Some of these facilities were renovated under the CASP programme, whilst some new ones had also been constructed. The establishment of dipping or livestock committees at each dipping tank was encouraged among animal owners, and with a few exceptions, these committees are working well.

In most cases, cattle owners contribute to a dipping compound fund administrated by the committee, and those not contributing are not allowed to dip their animals. Although many owners accept the responsibility of the welfare of their animals, there are also, those that do not care and their animals are a source of ticks and other diseases to the rest of the community. In some instances, these owners are not even allowed by the other owners to bring their cattle to the dipping tank for inspection, making it difficult for Veterinary Staff to do disease surveillance. This is discouraged as effective disease control revolves around almost all animals in a specific area being inspected. Disease control within a communal grazing system is very difficult for the individual

farmer, and the government has an obligation to control and enforce animal health issues in these circumstances.

4. Purpose and objectives of the policy

The purpose of this policy is to ensure a framework for efficient control results in animals since healthier animals resultantly leads to higher income and contributes to food security.

5. Authority of the policy

This policy functions under the custodianship of the Executive Authority and Accounting Officer of this Department and has been issued under the authority of Veterinary Services at the LDA.

6. Legal Framework

- Animal Diseases Act, 1984 (Act No 35 of 1984) which aims to provide for the control of animal diseases and parasites, for measures to promote animal health and for matters connected therewith.
- Meat Safety Act, 2000 (Act 40 of 2000) which aims to provide for measures to promote meat safety and the safety of animal products.
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7. Scope of application

All animals in communal farming areas of the Limpopo Province fall within the scope of application of this policy.

8. Definitions

a) Dipping Service

The provision of a dipping compound, handling facilities and human resources to dip cattle at communal inspection points.

b) Foot-and-Mouth Control Area

The Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) control area is divided into two zones namely infected zone and protection zone. Apart from the mentioned zones, the rest of the RSA is an FMD-free area which includes an inspection area along the FMD control area.

c) Dipping Compound or Dip-Stuff

This is a compound that is used to control ticks. It can be applied in the form of plunge dipping, spray, or as a pour-on, depending on the prevailing dipping facilities and the support systems in place. The senior manager Veterinary services Limpopo Province will determine the dipping compound to be used. In his decision he will consult field personnel, industry, current contracts available, tick-resistance against acaricides, statistics and other scientific data to his availability.

Wherever possible, plunge dipping will be preferred over pour-on application as it is far much cheaper.

d) Department

The Limpopo Department of Agriculture.

9. Policy pronouncements

9.1 The Benefits of a Dipping Service

The benefits of a dipping service are two fold; those to the owner/community, and those for government.

a) The Farmer / Owner

To control ecto-parasites of animals in order to control / prevent tick-borne diseases such as heartwater, redwater, gallsickness, theilerioses, sweating sickness and reduce blood loss, tissue damage and irritation caused by ecto-parasites.

To control other ecto-parasitic and related diseases such as myiasis, parafilaria, trypanosomiasis.

Efficient tick control results in healthier animals, more milk production because of less udder tissue damage, higher calve percentages because of less tissue damage on genital organs, higher market value for skins again because of less tissue damage and this all leads to a better valued animal or product at the market place.

The dipping service provides a regular animal health advice and other advice service, to the farmer, at the inspection point. It also gives a regular communication and contact point with the Department from where specialist advice and services can be requested. This ensures services at regular intervals at ground level.

b) The Department

Disease surveillance

Inspections in respect of controlled diseases such as Foot-and-Mouth Disease. This function of international, national, provincial and local importance is based on compulsory inspections at various intervals and movement control of various intensities in the whole of the FMD controlled area, as well as on compulsory vaccinations in certain zones.

Through the decades, a situation developed in the communal controlled areas whereby these compulsory inspections and vaccinations, as well as movement control to a large extent, were performed at communal dip tanks. In practice cattle owners bring their cattle herds to be dipped at communal dip tanks at regular-intervals. The opportunity whereby cattle are physically concentrated at certain points is then utilised by the State to perform compulsory cattle inspections, vaccinations, movement control and other disease control practices.

Due to cattle herd sizes and numbers of herds in the communal areas and budgetary deficit affecting personnel, dipping compounds and transport provision, there is no other practical or affordable way of controlling FMD and other diseases in communal areas than the current method of assembling at a common inspection point.

For the sake of upholding our country's internationally acquired status of having a FMD free zone and our favourable status for other diseases, it is absolutely essential to maintain a satisfactory level of control of this disease in the controlled areas. Most of our control activities are coincidentally in the communal farming areas.

The ideal opportunity created by dipping for disease surveillance such as for brucellosis and tuberculosis, as well as for other controlled, notifiable and other

conditions affecting the health of animals should be utilised to the full by the State, especially in communal areas.

For the same reasons as mentioned for FMD control, it is virtually impossible to perform disease surveillance properly and significantly in communal areas in the absence of the communal cattle dipping set up.

Surveillance of non-controlled diseases

Surveillance of the status of animals with respect to condition, general health, production, and reproduction as well as monitoring of mortalities is also made possible by the communal cattle dipping system. This regular inspection during dipping gives Veterinary Services the ability to establish an “Early Warning System” regarding any disease condition and precautionary measures can be activated.

Extension and liaison

The opportunity for effective extension, education, training, practical demonstrations and uptake of accurate census data and calculation of stock density, where many animal owners, managers and handlers are congregated at places due to the communal cattle dipping practice should be well appreciated. The costs of performing extension effectively without this opportunity would be enormous, rendering extension unaffordable and unachievable. The essential role of extension in the promotion of animal and human health and welfare in particular, and the RDP in general, is well known.

Animal census

The dipping service gives the opportunity to the Department to have accurate livestock census.

Image of the Department and building of relationships

To uphold the good image of the department amongst its clients and the general public and to enhance public relations in particularly the FMD control zones with its movement restriction and regular inspections, etc. is of importance in the sense that effective animal disease control and promotion of animal and human health and welfare without a positive image and sound public relations is virtually unachievable. Because of the perception and obvious benefit of dipping to farmers, the effect that dipping has on the image of the department is immense.

Immunity against tick-borne diseases

Whilst intensive dipping can lead to a minimal disease situation with low immunity, it is believed that this seldom occurs in practice, due to heavy tick challenge and/or irregular dipping frequency because of various reasons such as water supply problems and weather conditions. Jointly managed strategic dipping between the dipping committees and the Department will result in efficient immunity status within cattle groups.

Ectoparasite resistance against ectoparasiticides

This is a problem of major concern and is in many cases a result of indiscriminate use and alteration of ectoparasiticides. Being involved in the dipping service in these disease risk areas will give the Department knowledge and a role to play in this important facet of animal health.

Environmental considerations

The effect of dipping on demographics and therefore on overgrazing and the possible risk of environmental pollution should be considered in planning and execution of dipping programs. The uncontrolled use of ectoparasiticides may lead to poisoning of animals. The Department will now be able to control this. Only dipping compounds without adverse effects to the environment will be used.

Veterinary public health

The uncontrolled use of registered and unregistered chemicals to control ticks may lead to the presence of residues of such chemicals in the human food chain, which is highly undesirable. The involvement of the Department will reduce these occurrences.

9.2 Possible consequences if no Dipping Service is provided

Farmers / owners and the Department will not have the benefits as discussed above.

The status of FMD will not be known in the FMD control zone. No guarantees can be issued to trade partners.

If FMD occurs in the control zone, it might have spread some distance before being detected and this might cause a more complicated and costly eradication campaign. If FMD spreads out of the control zones, South Africa will lose its free status and that will result in export bans and subsequent financial losses for the country and farmers.

Other diseases can cause problems if allowed to be established in herds if an Early Warning System is not operational.

Farmers /owners will have financial losses because of ticks and tick borne diseases and deaths.

9.3 Provision and frequency of Dipping

The Department will provide a dipping service for cattle in the communal areas of the province.

The dipping service will be done at established dip tanks and inspection points.

Dipping will be weekly in the FMD-protection zone adjacent to the Kruger Park and adjoining reserves,

Fortnightly in the remainder of the FMD-protection zone

Every 28 days in the rest of the communal farming area of the province. Where a desire for more frequent dipping arises, this can be organized at the farmers' expense.

If on the day of dipping, during the routine inspection, the dipping committee and the responsible animal health technician decide jointly that dipping is not necessary on that day; the dipping can be postponed to the next dipping opportunity. The dipping when tick numbers justify dipping is called Strategic dipping and this type of dipping program is encouraged because it gives livestock the best opportunity to develop and maintain an immunity against tick

borne diseases and less chance of tick resistance being build up against the dipping compound.

This service will cover only communal farmers. Other categories of farmers either than communal farmers will be encouraged to have a sustainable tick control system at own cost, with the Department providing the technical skills.

9.4 Financial Implications for the Department

The Department will fund the dipping service fully.

10. Default

This policy has been developed within a specific legal framework in order to address a specific matter in the best possible way. Any violation of this policy is therefore unacceptable and should a deviation be needed, written permission from the HOD will be needed.

11. Inception date

The date of approval is the inception date.

12. Termination and review conditions

This policy shall be reviewed every 24 months, but can be terminated and/or reviewed as and when needed at any given time.

13. Enquiries

All enquiries regarding this policy shall be directed towards:

Veterinary Services

Limpopo Department of Agriculture

Private Bag x9487

POLOKWANE

0700

Tel: 015 294 3000.

Recommended:

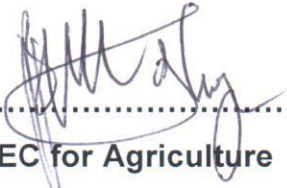

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**Head of Department
(Maisela, RJ)**

2015-06-24
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Date

Approved:


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**Hon MEC for Agriculture
(Matshoge, BAJ)**

2015/07/24
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Date