

## 2.0 Animal Health System

### 2.1 The Legislative Environment

Animal Health in Swaziland is regulated through various Acts and regulations, the principal legislation being *The Animal Disease Act 7/1965* which under Section 3 provides for formulation of specific regulations applicable to general animal disease control and also for regulations specific to 'Specified Diseases'. Some of the specific controls and regulations provided for by the Act include close monitoring and prompt reporting of diseases, imposition of immediate provisional quarantine measures, notification procedures, importation of animals and animal (food and non-food) products, quarantine, duties of owners in facilitating disease prevention and control etc.. Legal notice No. 140 of 2007 entitled, "The Stock Disease (Amendment) Regulation, 2007" (under Section 3) and came into effect on the 25<sup>th</sup> February 2007, amended regulation 2 of the Animal Diseases Act 7/1965 thereby adding to the list of notifiable diseases.

The Livestock Identification Act 13/2001 provides for identification and traceability of livestock including cattle and small ruminants. Currently the Act is being implemented whereby cattle are hot iron branded with a country mark (shield) and a dip-tank of origin mark (number). Individual identification of all the cattle using ear tags and computerisation of the livestock traceability system started in early 2009 and is being done under this Act. It is envisaged that at full implementation of computerisation of all animal records livestock, starting with cattle, will only be moved once they have an ear tag and through an electronic movement permit and verification system.

The Veterinary Public Health Act 17/2013 makes provision of ensuring high level of consumer protection with regard to food safety and improving the quality of life for the public by facilitating advanced methods of primary production in the food chain of food of animal origin. It establishes the Veterinary Public Health Unit and its functions. The Act applies to unprocessed and processed animal products for human consumption at the level of primary production at national level and those imported from third countries. It also provides for official controls in respect of slaughter facilities and establishments including requirements for its proper function, quality control (including standards/procedures and verification inspections) of locally produced and imported products as well as exports, and certification of imports and exports.

Other legislation includes the Pounds Act 24/1966 which address impoundment and handling of livestock in urban and in rural areas and the 'Regulation and Control of Veterinary Drugs and Medicinal Substances, 2012' which regulate the importation, sale and use of veterinary drugs and medicinal substances in Swaziland. Both the Pounds Act of 1966 and the regulations on the control of veterinary drugs and medicinal substances of 2012 are consistent with the Animal Diseases Act of 1965.

### 2.2 Animal Health and Surveillance System

#### 2.2.1 Dip-tanks and Dipping

All primary animal health activities are centred on dipping which is compulsory under the Animal Disease Act 7/1965. The dip-tank is the epidemiological unit and all geographical descriptions of livestock are designated to a dip-tank. This means all livestock and their owners are registered with a dip-tank which is either publicly owned (Government and community) or privately owned. Each dip tank covers an area of about 7.5km radius (except private dip tanks). Each of the four regions has sub-regional offices under which the dip-tanks are fall. There are 28 sub-regional offices in all each with an area of jurisdiction that has a number of dip-tank areas which in turn has a number of animals registered under that dip-tank in the Dip-tank Register book. There are also animals which do not regularly appear in the Dip-tank Register and these are those animals which do not travel to the dip-tank or which are not dipped or counted regularly either at home/farm or at the dip-tank facility. These include pigs, poultry, donkeys and horses, dogs, and rabbits.

Cattle, goats and sheep are presented to the dip-tank at regular intervals (generally weekly) for inspection and dipping under supervision by specially trained animal health technicians (Veterinary Assistants). At the dip-tank the VA is responsible for maintaining the Dip-tank Register. This entails registration of livestock owners and allocation of kraal numbers, reconciliation of livestock numbers, registration of calves born, and reconciliation of movement permits. Each VA is assigned a maximum of four dipping tanks which he/she supervise between Mondays and Thursdays. Fridays are reserved for reporting back to office and administrative activities.

Animals that attend dipping are cattle, goats and sheep with cattle attending in frequencies ranging from once weekly to once monthly depending on geographical area and agro-ecological zoning of the area. Absenteeism from dipping is discouraged by preferring charges, under the Animal Disease Act 7/1965, against the kraal owner. However, animals absent from dipping due to ill health are visited and physically examined by the VA after dipping. Activities that take place at the dip-tank are dipping, livestock inspections, treatments, castrations, vaccinations (including that of animals that are normally not required to be physically dipped like dogs) and local administrative and education/awareness meetings.

### 2.2.2 Disease Surveillance and Control

Disease surveillance is in two types, 1) general or scanning surveillance and 2) active or targeted surveillance. General surveillance incorporates receiving of reports from animal owners on disease occurrences ('passive') as well as findings from meat inspection activities or other inspections and disease control activities as happens at the dip-tank during a dipping and inspection event. On the other hand active/targeted surveillance is done most frequently in testing for presence or absence of disease in a given population of animals as has on various occasions been done for foot and mouth disease.

For general surveillance purposes at the dip-tanks, during a dipping event the Veterinary Assistant (VA) physically counts and inspects every animal presented for dipping. If an animal shows suspect signs of illness, the VA restrains and closely inspects that particular animal (s). Some cases are also identified or reported to VA's during area patrols. Disease control activities are divided into treatment and preventive activities. Treatments are conducted by Veterinary Officers through visits to farms, dip-tanks and at animal owner homesteads and kraals. Besides individual animal treatments veterinarians also attend to herd/population diseases and ailments. Some treatments are also done by animal health technicians (Veterinary Assistants and Animal Health Inspectors) depending on the complexity of the problem. Farmers are also allowed to perform treatments to their own animals for simplistic ailments and treatments like deworming, mastitis, wound management and treatment for tick-borne diseases among others.

### 2.2.3 The National Disease Reporting System

Swaziland's system of National Animal Health Reporting and Information Management collects data from the all activities of the national disease surveillance system. A disease report from any source can be handled in one of two ways; 1) **Emergency Disease Reporting** which is for all Notifiable Diseases and 2) **Monthly Disease Reporting** for all other diseases (including the notifiable diseases). Emergency disease reporting uses the OIE **Immediate or follow up report for specified diseases forms**, which are sent by RVOs within 24 hours to the Veterinary Epidemiology Unit (with copies sent to the DVLS and SVO-Field Services) while monthly disease reporting uses the **AU-IBAR form** which at the end of the month is compiled by the RVO and includes all diseases that occurred in the region for that month.

## 2.2.4 Animal Movement Control

All local and cross border livestock and livestock product movement is regulated through the Animal diseases Act 1/1965. International movement of all domestic and wild animals and their products requires veterinary certification as guided by international regulations, guidelines and standards which have been incorporated into local laws and regulations. The dip-tank as the epidemiological unit defines the spatial origin and destination of all livestock such as pigs, goats/sheep, equines and cattle whereby all live animal movements into and out of the dip tank area require a local Stock Removal Permit (SRP) obtained from the area or Departmental Sub-regional Office responsible for the dip tank area of origin. Before an animal movement is effected the VA at the dip-tank area of origin inspects the animal and endorses the details (including colour, sex, age group and official identification marks) on the SRP if the animal is found healthy to move to another dip-tank area, the dip-tank of destination. At destination the animal(s) must be presented to the VA controlling the dip-tank or abattoir of destination, who in turn will inspect them on arrival and endorse the permit. The stock will then be entered into his/her Dip-tank Register. Stock in transit must always be accompanied by a legally endorsed original of the Stock Removal Permit. Failure to produce this document leads to immediate arrest and detention of the stock by the Police or Veterinary Officials.

## 2.2.5 Import and Export Control

Importation is governed by the Animal Disease Act 7/1965, specifically Regulation 6. The Veterinary Field Services Division is responsible for the import and export control of live animals and their products (except wild life and immediate slaughter cattle), handling of private and government quarantine issues and facilities as well as ports of entry inspections and monitoring. The Veterinary Public Health Division regulates the import and export of raw and primary processed food of animal origin (meat and meat products as well as milk and milk products). Import permits for the importation of wild animals and their products as well as cattle for immediate slaughter are issued at Headquarters by the Senior Veterinary Officer (Field Services). All importation requires the issuance of an import permit by the responsible official and certification of such product by an official designated by the Government Veterinary Services of the exporting country.

At the destination of the imports be it live animals or large consignments of products, veterinary officials are the ones who should break the seals and inspect the consignment as to it meeting import requirements and conditions (destination inspection). This means animals destined for the Government Quarantine go directly to such a place and a veterinary official will open and disembark the animals whereas if it is a 'large' consignment of food product of animal origin the vehicle is required to go to the Meat Hygiene Services for product and document inspection. All importers are required to notify the responsible veterinary office/official before animals arrive in the country.

### Port of entry control

Out of eleven ports of entry between South Africa and Swaziland only three are used for importation/exportation of animals and animal products, and both main ports of entry between Mozambique and Swaziland (Lomahasha and Mhlumeni) may be used for the purpose under stringent conditions though. The three designated ports of entry for livestock and livestock products are Ngwenya (Oshoek), Lavumisa and Mahamba. There are members of veterinary staff stationed at the five designated ports of entry whose duty is to inspect imports and documentation, with the assistance of customs officials, before they are allowed entry into the country. Imports and exports are recorded in note books with appropriate details of consignment description and quantity, dates, import permits and health certificates, origin and destination, etc., etc.. In the non-designated ports of entry, customs officials have the responsibility to turn back any consignments of animals or products of animal origin although veterinary Services is continuously increasing the number of veterinary supervised ports of entry with Matsamo, Mananga, Sicunusa all positioned with Cordon Guards to supervise imports with assistance from other border post officials (customs, immigration and police).

The officials at the border posts are supported by law to stop imports that do not conform to the regulations of importation such as expired import permits and/or certificates, non-compliant certificates, non-conformity of products with import papers, etc.. in cases of non-compliance products may be turned back or destroyed on site depending on size and value as well as owner preference on the two options.

### **Government Quarantines Stations**

There are two main government quarantines that are used for purposes of import (and occasionally export) of live animals. These are Mpsi government Quarantine Station and Maphiveni Government Quarantine. Animals admitted at these quarantines are those imported for breeding purposes from neighbouring countries and those theft recovered animals stolen from Swaziland and recovered in neighbouring countries or stolen from Swaziland and waiting to be returned into a neighbouring country. All government quarantines are under the jurisdiction of a government veterinary officer but day to day operations are done by cordon guards and veterinary assistants under the close supervision of an Animal Health Inspector. Animals are kept in the quarantine for 30 days.

### **Private quarantine facilities**

The Department has on occasions allowed the use of quarantine facilities outside government ownership (private quarantines) for purposes of importation. The process involves proper justification as to why animals cannot be kept at the government quarantine facility and veterinary officers give permission for use after due facility preparation and commissioning by themselves in writing. Facilities should meet specifications for construction to meet required standards of separation, confinement and treatment (management) of the animals. Each importation requires due consideration of the need for private quarantine and facility inspection. Animals are kept in the quarantine for 30 days.