

# Meat ban could cost South Africa R4bn

A ban on some meat exports after a foot-and-mouth disease outbreak could cost South Africa over US\$490 million a year, an industry group said Monday, 3 October 2011.

An outbreak of the disease in February in parts of the eastern KwaZulu-Natal province prompted South Africa to impose a seven-week export ban on red meat.

But the World Organisation for Animal Health has yet to end the South Africa's suspension as a foot-and-mouth free zone, meaning many parts of the world will not accept the country's meat.

The Red Meat Industry Forum said in filings to a parliamentary agriculture committee that the losses could total four billion rand (\$490 million, 368 million euros) a year.

South Africa's agriculture minister Tina Joemat-Pettersson declared on 19 April that the outbreak was under control, but the industry group said that the government had yet to try to regain international certification.

"This loss of earnings can also be attributed to the department's inability to enforce and comply with the provisions of the Animal Disease Act," the group said in its filing to parliament.

Foot-and-mouth does not infect humans but is highly contagious and potentially deadly in cattle, goats, sheep and other cloven-hoofed animals.

*Source: Sapa-AFP*