

# Botswana suspends beef exports over suspected FMD outbreak

By [Brian Benza](#)

25 Aug 2022

Botswana has suspended beef exports after a suspected outbreak of foot and mouth disease, the Department of Veterinary Services said on Wednesday, a move that could hurt the country's earnings from the lucrative EU market.



A calf follows cattle being herded in Cato Ridge, South Africa, July 28, 2019. REUTERS/Rogan Ward/File Photo

Along with South Africa and Namibia, Botswana is one of the biggest beef exporters to the European Union, where it enjoys duty- and quota-free access and where it saw export earnings drop from \$130m in 2010 to \$20m in 2020 amid the Covid-19 pandemic, central bank statistics show.



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"Farmers are informed that a movement standstill for all cloven hoof animals has been imposed due to suspected foot and mouth disease cases in the North East District," Kefentse Motshegwa, acting director of Veterinary Services, said, adding that exports of fresh meat and raw animal products have been suspended.

"The movement restriction facilitates disease investigation and will be lifted once investigations are concluded," Motshegwa added.

Botswana, which is the size of France, has seen its cattle population fall to 2 million from 3.1 million 10 years ago due to persistent drought spells and disease outbreaks.

Apart from the EU, Botswana exports beef and live cattle to Zambia, Zimbabwe, Namibia and South Africa, which has also had to tackle sporadic outbreaks of foot and mouth disease.

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