

Reports of Rift Valley Fever in Mpumalanga

There have been reports of an outbreak of Rift Valley Fever, a fever-causing viral disease mainly affecting domestic animals such as cattle and goats, in the area of Nkomazi in Mpumalanga.

The Department of Agriculture said on Thursday, 6 March 2008, that the disease was affecting a herd of buffalo.

The department said authorities were still investigating the origin of the disease.

While the outbreak remains localised and under very strict monitoring and control, any suspicion of the disease in animals should be reported to the nearest state veterinary office for livestock.

The disease is spread by infected mosquitoes and livestock owners are urged to apply mosquito repellents to prevent their livestock from being bitten.

The department further indicated there was a possibility the disease could be passed onto humans, but there was no need for members of the public to panic as transmission to humans was mostly through handling of sick, dead animals or aborted foetuses.

Therefore, members of the public are being urged not to handle and cut up any such animals.

According to the authorities, anyone handling the carcasses should be wearing protective clothes and goggles.

The department said individuals showing symptoms of flu following their handling of dead carcasses or foetuses should report to the district surgeon.

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