

Campaign initiated following African swine fever outbreak

The Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development (DALRRD) will as of Wednesday, 3 July 2019 embark on roadshows and awareness campaigns to meet with farmers and affected communities after African swine fever was reported in four provinces.



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"Following the outbreaks of African swine fever (ASF) reported in the North West, Gauteng, Free State and Mpumalanga provinces, the DALRRD will embark on roadshows and awareness campaigns to meet with farmers/pork producers, affected communities and the public at large," said the department on Monday.

Two ASF outbreaks were identified in Mpumalanga and Gauteng in May following the outbreak reported in the North West at the beginning of April 2019.

The roadshows will kick-off in Bloemfontein in the Free State on Wednesday, where the department's Food Import and Export Standards Directorate for Animal Health Promotion, together with the Provincial Departments of Agriculture, will spend two days in the area.

"In collaboration with the Pork Producers Association, [we] will conduct ASF awareness campaigns to educate farmers/pork producers on the prevention, transmission and spread of the disease. These will encompass information on the risk of feeding pigs kitchen waste/garbage, risk of buying from unknown sources, public health risks, symptoms,

prevention and control of African swine fever," the department said.

The awareness campaign will then move to Rustenburg in the North West on 15 July and conclude in Zeerust on 18 July.

Vrede in the Free State will get its turn on 22 July and Harrismith and Warden the following day.

"These awareness campaigns are arranged for these selected provinces. The other provinces will follow in due course," the department said.

About ASF

The department stressed that ASF does not affect humans, adding that the consumption of pork is safe.

"However, any meat and products from affected pigs can be a source of infection to other pigs. Farmers should therefore ensure that if any swill is fed to pigs, the swill must be pre-cooked for at least an hour. This will ensure the inactivation of the ASF virus, as well as other diseases of concern," it said.

There is also no vaccine for ASF and no treatment for affected pigs. The disease kills almost all infected pigs and can be transmitted by contact with infected wild or domestic pigs, ingestion of contaminated material (e.g., food waste, feed, or garbage) and contaminated fomites (people, vehicles, equipment, shoes).

The disease can also be transmitted by biological vectors (soft ticks).

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