



NEWS RELEASE

United States Department of Agriculture • Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service • Legislative and Public Affairs
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USDA SEEKS PUBLIC COMMENT ON SOUTH AFRICAN FOOT-AND-MOUTH DISEASE RISK ANALYSIS

WASHINGTON, March 5, 2008--The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) seeks public comment on a risk analysis related to the importation of ruminants and ruminant products from the Republic of South Africa.

The purpose of the risk analysis is to assess the foot-and-mouth disease (FMD) status and related disease risks associated with importing animals and animal products. APHIS will use the risk analysis and the comments it receives to determine whether certain restrictions should be relieved on importation of these products from the Republic of South Africa.

On Nov. 6, 2000, APHIS removed the Republic of South Africa from the list of regions considered to be free of FMD--thereby restricting or prohibiting the importation of ruminants, swine and ruminant and swine products--after the disease was confirmed in two provinces. The Republic of South Africa's National Department of Agriculture responded immediately to the detection of the disease and initiated measures to eradicate the disease. APHIS now is reassessing the situation, in accordance with World Organization for Animal Health standards.

FMD is a severe, highly contagious viral disease of cattle, swine and other cloven-hooved ruminants. FMD causes severe losses in the production of meat and milk and has serious implications for animal agriculture in any country where the disease is detected. The United States has not had an outbreak of FMD since 1929. APHIS has a strong system in place for detecting and responding to outbreaks of foreign animal diseases like FMD and places trade restrictions on regions where the disease is detected. FMD is not transmissible from animals to humans.

The notice was published in the Feb. 15 *Federal Register*.

Consideration will be given to comments received on or before April 15. Send an original and two copies of postal mail or commercial delivery comments to Docket No. APHIS-2008-0001, Regulatory Analysis and Development, PPD, APHIS, Station 3A-03.8, 4700 River Road, Unit 118, Riverdale, MD 20737-1238. Comments can be submitted on the Federal eRulemaking portal at <http://www.regulations.gov/fdmspublic/component/main?main=DocketDetail&d=APHIS-2008-0001>. Click on "Add Comments" to view public comments and related materials available electronically.

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Comments are posted on the Regulations.gov Web site and also can be viewed at USDA, Room 1141, South Building, 14th St. and Independence Ave., S.W., Washington, D.C., between 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, excluding holidays. To facilitate entry into the comment reading room, please call (202) 690-2817.

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