

MEDIA RELEASE PSA demands unpaid FMD vaccination overtime for KwaZulu-Natal Department of Agriculture employees

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The Public Servants Association (PSA) is demanding urgent intervention by the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Agriculture and Rural Development to resolve outstanding overtime payments owed to employees who participated in the Province's foot-and-mouth disease (FMD) vaccination campaign.

The campaign commenced on 26 February 2026 after the outbreak was declared a disaster by the Department. Employees worked extended hours, including weekends and consecutive days, often from 05:30 to 18:30, contributing to the vaccination of more than two million animals across the Province.

Despite these efforts, Animal Health Technicians, State Veterinarians, Control Animal Health Technicians, Veterinary Technologists, Veterinary Public Health Officers, and Expanded Public Works Programme workers have not received payment for the overtime. The Department acknowledged the outstanding payments. It explained that a request submitted to the Head of Department in April 2026 to allocate R30 million for overtime payments was reportedly not approved owing to insufficient funding.

The PSA further questions the management and accountability of the campaign, particularly as accommodation and subsistence and travel arrangements had been approved for employees undertaking campaign-related duties, but no approval for overtime payment. Employees who worked beyond their normal hours must be treated fairly and legitimate overtime claims must be paid in accordance with applicable departmental policies and labour-relations procedures. Employees should not bear the consequences of funding constraints or administrative decisions beyond their control. If the payment is not received within seven days, the PSA will have no choice but to refer a matter for dispute resolution to relevant bargaining council.

The PSA commends the dedication of employees who contributed to protecting KwaZulu-Natal's livestock industry and to containing the spread of FMD. Their efforts must be recognised through fair treatment, transparent communication, and timely payment.

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