

## **PRESS RELEASE**

(for immediate release)

### **RPO WELCOMES BIOSECURITY REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The RPO (Red Meat Producers' Organisation) welcomes the task teams report on biosafety for the Minister of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development, Ms Thoko Didiza. The task teams report makes recommendations for enhancing biosecurity measures at livestock auctions, abattoirs, and other agricultural facilities, to protect the health and welfare of animals and the livelihoods of farmers and producers.

The RPO has long been committed to promoting animal health and welfare and the safety and quality of red meat products for consumers. The recommendations made by the task team reflect the need for a comprehensive and coordinated approach to biosafety in the red meat industry.

One of the report's key recommendations is the establishment of a national database for animal health and disease information, which would enable farmers and producers to track and monitor their animals' health status and identify and respond to disease outbreaks. This recommendation is particularly important in light of recent outbreaks of highly infectious state controlled diseases, such as African Swine Fever and Foot-and-Mouth Disease, which have devastated the red meat industry.

The task teams report also recommends developing a national biosecurity strategy, which would provide a framework for implementing biosecurity measures at all levels of the red meat supply chain. The RPO again supports this recommendation and believes that such a strategy would provide much-needed guidance and direction for farmers, producers and regulatory authorities.

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Other key recommendations of the report include establishing quarantine facilities at livestock auctions and abattoirs, implementing strict hygiene protocols, and training staff in biosecurity best practices. The RPO fully supports these recommendations and will work closely with its members and regulatory authorities to ensure successful implementation.

The RPO would like to thank the Minister of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development, as well as the task team on biosafety, for their tireless efforts in promoting the health and welfare of animals, as well as the safety and quality of red meat products for consumers. The organisation looks forward to working with all stakeholders in the red meat industry to implement the recommendations of the report and to enhance the biosecurity of the red meat supply chain.

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**DATE** : 11 May 2023

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