

It is worth noting that in animal disease control, it is important to have a system of animal traceability that not only allows for accurate identification of individual animals, but also effectively safeguards information on health history of individual animals (e.g. vaccination and disease history).<sup>35</sup>

The gaps discussed above, which were identified in the traceability system used in FMD vaccinated zones were mainly attributable to the department's failure to devise an accurate and reliable animal traceability and identification system in the FMD vaccinated zones (red zones). The DVS only devised an enhanced computerised traceability system in FMD free zones called the Livestock Identification and Trace-Back System (LITS). This system used a reticular bolus as a form of identifying cattle (individually) and linking the bolus number to the owners' information and location. This information was digitally stored in the central database and was accessible to multiple remote users. However, management highlighted that LITS was not rolled out in FMD vaccinated zones due to consideration of the risks of FMD transmission inherent in the reticular bolus insertion process. Nevertheless, no alternative computerised system was ever devised for the FMD vaccinated zones.

As a result of absence of an accurate and reliable livestock traceability system in the FMD vaccinated zones, the risk of late detection of FMD infections cannot be overemphasised. Effective traceability of individual animals could have enabled prompt implementation of preventive measures (such as surveillance and post vaccination monitoring of individual animals) and assisted in timely control of outbreaks, thereby delivering considerable animal welfare and commercial benefits to the farming community in FMD vaccinated zones.

The Office of the Auditor General acknowledges that, at the time of audit, the Botswana Animal Information and Traceability System was being piloted in the FMD free zones with plans to roll it out to the entire country. This system was expected to bridge the gaps of the branding system used in vaccinated areas,

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<sup>35</sup> <http://faolex.fao.org/cgi-bin/faolex>: EUC Regulations