

Progress with the AAMP

Dr Ndumiso Mazibuko represents the dairy industry in the Livestock Value Chain Roundtable of the Agriculture and Agro-processing Master Plan (AAMP). Milk SA is represented in all the roundtable's working groups, including trade and infrastructure, policy and regulatory, and biosecurity.

The Policy and Regulatory Working Group has, among others, identified the following priority areas:

- Establishment of a Section 20 advisory panel, whose scope will include veterinary research, scientific experimentation, and vaccine production.
- Creation of an animal disease emergency fund.
- Improvements to chemical residue monitoring systems.
- Implementation of the Veterinary Strategy.
- Review of outdated notices and disease outbreak communication protocols.

The Trade and Infrastructure Working Group has established a task team to draft a national livestock export plan.

The Research and Technology Working Group envisages establishing a centralised livestock research database. Biosecurity has been identified as one of the key focus areas for research.

The roundtable further recommended:

- The urgent implementation of the Livestock Identification and Traceability System (LITS) to improve disease control and market access.
- The establishment of a disease emergency fund.
- The creation of a centralised biosecurity hub and risk analysis unit to coordinate disease surveillance and risk management.

Milk SA yoghurt project delivers impressive results

As part of Milk SA's projects, the University of Pretoria investigated the use of probiotic yoghurt to help combat infections from, for instance, *Listeria*, *Candida*, and *Escherichia coli*. Through strain selection, probiotic strains of dairy and bovine origin demonstrated good inhibitory activity against pathogenic *E. coli* strains, as well as against *Candida albicans*. An additional benefit was that the probiotic strains remained viable in yoghurt throughout its normal shelf life.

Probiotic species within the *Lactobacillus* group also showed potential in inhibiting *Listeria monocytogenes* strains. However, responses may vary among pathogen strains due to genetic differences influencing biofilm formation, which is a major challenge in controlling *Listeria* infections.

A further study investigated the impact of probiotic yoghurt containing *Lactobacillus rhamnosus* GG (LGG) and *Bifidobacterium animalis* subsp. *lactis* BB-12 (BB-12) on gut microbiome modulation in patients. The probiotic yoghurt led to improvements in microbiota composition, richness, stability, resilience, and taxa dominance when compared to conventional yoghurt, and even more so when compared to no yoghurt consumption.

Additional benefits may extend over the longer term, as probiotic yoghurt has the potential to improve gut microbiota among obese individuals and those with other diet-related conditions.



Milk flows southwards amid FMD disaster

Although foot-and-mouth disease (FMD) was widespread in the Eastern Cape during 2024, causing major losses in production and producers' income, national milk production still increased by 3,56% year-on-year, albeit from a low base.

The continued spread of the FMD virus during 2025 resulted in a significant decline in milk production, especially during the last quarter of 2025 and continuing through February 2026. Nevertheless, Milk SA's raw milk figures still reflected a year-on-year increase of 0,75% in 2025.

Since October 2025, however, milk production has shown a contracting trend for five consecutive months, with February 2026 recording a 4,62% year-on-year decline.

On a more positive note, dairy retail sales figures from NielsenIQ indicate encouraging trends in 2025, which we hope will continue into 2026. The industry therefore remains hopeful for a speedy recovery of the national dairy herd, particularly as the national vaccination programme has been in full operation since February.