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# WHAT`S UP?

## Bird flu detected in beef tissue

Bird flu has been detected in beef for the first time, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) recently announced. The USDA said the H5N1 virus was found as part of the testing of 96 dairy cows that were diverted from the supply because federal inspectors noticed signs of illness during routine inspections of carcasses at meat processing plants.

Bird flu has been confirmed in dairy cattle herds in nine states, has been found in milk, and has prompted the slaughter of millions of chickens and turkeys. But finding it in beef is a new development for the outbreak, which started in 2022. – CBS News

## Donkey milk benefits piglet health

Research by the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine and Animal Science at the University of São Paulo revealed that supplementation with donkey milk reduced the release of cortisol, a stress hormone, and the inflammatory response in piglets during the weaning period.

"We were able to verify that donkey milk mitigated the inflammatory response that the stress of weaning and the change of diet caused in the piglets, when compared to the treatment with skimmed bovine milk and the group that did not receive supplementation. The results suggest that supplementation with donkey milk may be a strategy to reduce the damage associated with an early stressful event, reducing the release of cortisol and also reducing the expression of IL1 Beta, which can trigger inflammatory responses," highlighted the researchers.

The results of the work also indicate that the production of this milk could eliminate the slaughter of donkeys for export of the skin, which has put the survival of the species at risk.

– The Pig Site

## Lesotho too dependent on SA milk imports

During a recent briefing in Maseru, the CEO of the Lesotho National Dairy Board (LNDB), Abiel Mashala, noted that domestic production and processing of dairy products in Lesotho do not meet local consumption needs. Over 80% of dairy products consumed in the country are imported from South Africa.

"I found that, as a country, we depend on importing improved breeds from South Africa for milk production, and most of the time we are supplied with poor quality dairy heifers which do not meet the criteria in some instances to be called dairy cows," he said. He also mentioned that even though some farmers are engaged in dairy farming, they do not know much about farming.

A recent study by LNDB found that over 60% of farmers spent about three months without animal feed during the dry period, which directly impacts the production of milk in the country. Almost all Basotho depend on importing fodder and animal feed, which are expensive.

"We also found that there is the challenge of a lack of milk processing, which means that even if farmers can increase their milk production, their milk will go to waste due to a scarcity of processors in the country." – Public Eye

## NWK grades 2 000km of gravel roads

The team at NWK used six road graders to grade around 2 000km of gravel roads to and from their silo complexes. The project, which kicked off on 22 April this year, cost an estimated R2 million. This is the third year that NWK has undertaken this project. This follows the signing of a memorandum of understanding between the company and North West's Department of Public Works and Roads in 2021 to improve the condition of the province's gravel roads.

According to Jaco du Rand, senior manager of grain, producers are experiencing a particularly trying season; however, the NWK wants to assure them that they won't have to contend with ungraded gravel roads as well.

Farmworkers and school children use these roads daily. Roads in the Coligny, Gerdau, Bodenstein, Boschpoort, Ottosdal, Sannieshof and Barberspan districts have been graded.

– Press release, NWK

## Pangolin rescued after high-speed car chase

Five suspects were arrested after taking part in a pangolin sale in Cullinan in May this year. Warrant officer Johan van Dyk said in a statement that information was received that a pangolin was being offered for sale in Cullinan.

"The Cullinan Stock Theft and Endangered Species Unit launched an investigation to track and apprehend the suspects and rescue the smuggled pangolin. During the ongoing investigation, it was established that a transaction would occur on 17 May," according to Van Dyk.

Two vehicles arrived at the designated location, and the static team arrested three suspects in one of the vehicles. Van Dyk said police also gave chase to a second vehicle in the location which had witnessed the arrests taking place. All five suspects were arrested.

Van Dyke said the rescued pangolins were taken to a wildlife sanctuary for safety. – Citizen

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#### Zim takes lion's share of SA maize exports

Data from the South African Grain Information Service (Sagis) shows that in the 2023/24 marketing year, maize exports amounted to 3,4 million tonnes, down 6% from the previous year.

In the past, South Korea, Japan and Taiwan were the leading markets for South Africa's maize exporters. However, in the 2023/24 marketing year, Zimbabwe took the lion's share of the exports, accounting for 18% of the 3,4 million tonnes of exports.

The surge in exports to Zimbabwe comes after a few years of modest exports to the country because of decent domestic harvests and the restrictions on genetically modified (GM) maize, which the government often used as a barrier to imports in certain seasons. However, the regulations have changed, and Zimbabwe now imports GM maize. – *Agbiz*

#### EU sees decrease in livestock population

In 2023, the European Union's (EU) livestock populations were lower than a year earlier. Compared to 2022, the pig and bovine populations decreased by 1%, while sheep declined by 3%, and goats by 5%. In 2023, the EU had 133 million pigs, 74 million bovine animals, 58 million sheep and 11 million goats. This information comes from provisional data on the EU's livestock population, published by Eurostat.

Over the past decade, the populations of all livestock species have declined. The population of bovine animals in the EU decreased the least, down by 5% compared with 2013, followed by pigs (down 6%). Sheep numbers decreased by 9%, while that of goats experienced a sharp decline of 15%.

– *National Hog Farmer*

#### Grape waste reduces methane emissions

Researchers at the University of California, Davis have discovered that adding grape pomace from winemaking waste to dairy cow feed reduces methane emissions by 10 to 11%. This sustainable approach not only helps in cutting greenhouse gases, but also enhances milk quality by increasing polyunsaturated fats.

The study reveals that grape pomace improves feed efficiency without compromising the milk's fatty acid composition. This finding offers a dual benefit of reducing agricultural waste and emissions while potentially lowering production costs for dairy farmers. – *Fresh Plaza*

#### Southern white rhinos find new home

African Parks, a conservation organisation, has officially launched the rewilding phase of 'Rhino Rewild', an ambitious plan to rewild 2 000 southern white rhino into secure protected areas in Africa over the next ten years. In the first move of this continent-wide effort, 40 southern white rhinos were donated to the Munywana Conservancy in Zululand, KwaZulu-Natal, in support of the conservancy's successful conservation and community efforts.

According to Peter Fearnhead, CEO of African Parks: "Rhino Rewild is one of our most ambitious undertakings to date, where together with a multitude of governmental, conservation and community organisations, and key funders, we have the rare opportunity to help de-risk a species, and in the process to help secure some of the most critical conservation areas not just in Africa, but in the world." – *African Parks*

#### Region 24 showcases top flocks

Almost 300 animals competed in a regional flock competition at the Mangolong shearing shed, situated in Maluti B in the Matatiele district of the Eastern Cape.

The enthusiasm of the nearly 600 attendees from surrounding districts of Mount Fletcher, Maluti A and Maclear were tangible, and farmers showcased their best quality animals to compete in the four categories of rams, ewes, two-tooth ewes, and lambs. The ram category received the most entries on 94, ewes on 87, two-tooth ewes on 50, and 46 entries in the lambs category. – *NWKV Facebook page* <sup>SP</sup>