

Real cost of Rift Valley fever outbreak emerges

The Agricultural Research Council (ARC) has estimated the economic cost incurred by livestock producers in the Eastern Cape, Northern Cape and Free State as a result of the 2008-2010 Rift Valley fever (RVF) outbreak at R431 million.

Total animal production losses were estimated at R367,4 million, according to a recently-released study by Zimbini Mdlulwa, a researcher at the ARC's Economic Analysis Unit and a Master's student in agricultural economics at the University of Pretoria.

Northern Cape sheep farmers lost an estimated R171,7 million followed by the Eastern Cape with R24,3 million and the Free State with R14,6 million.

"The average revenue losses incurred by individual farmers who kept more than 1 000 sheep were estimated at R108 625," she said.

Inclusive of milk losses estimated at R32 million, cattle farmers' losses were approximated at R53,1 million in the Eastern Cape, R27,5 million in the Free State and R27,2 million in the Northern Cape.