

Dear South Africa is a network of online platforms designed to facilitate government and encourage the public to participate in unbiased decision-making processes or policy formation at SOE, municipal, provincial and national levels.



Draft Meat Safety Act

28 February to 30 June 2020

(Ms) T. Didiza, Minister of Agriculture, Land Reform and, Rural Development invited institutions, organizations and individuals to submit written comments on the proposed update to Schedule 1, as provided for in section 1(2) of the Meat Safety Act, 2000 (Act No 40 of 2000), listing the animals to which the Act applies.

The notice for an amendment to the Meat Safety Act, (Act No 40 of 2000), was released on 28 February 2020 where the initial closing date was set to 60 days from the date of release. The closing date was further extended to 30 June 2020.

Submissions and enquiries were directed to;

Mr M Molefe at VPH@daff.gov.za or fax: (012) 319 7699.

The Enviro Expert Coalition hosted a participation project through Dear South Africa's mobile and online platform to facilitate, educate and encourage public participation and comment to shape this amendment.

<https://dearsouthafrica.co.za/draft-meat-safety-act/>

Included on the web page was:

- 1 - the published Amendment and related documents as downloadable PDFs
- 2 - a summary list of the new animal species was also included.
- 3 - a live view of public comments (with a counter and breakdown reflecting number of participants)
- 4 - video summaries
- 5 - links to relevant media articles
- 6 - a portal which posed a single question (with the option of three responses)
- 7 - a comment facility to provide input on the Amendment

Each public entry was individually delivered to VPH@daff.gov.za. DearSA also captured all public entries which have been used to produce this report.

Note; In order to accurately reflect public comment, DearSA projects are unbiased and hold no influencing opinion or agenda. **Raw captured data is attached as an Excel file.**

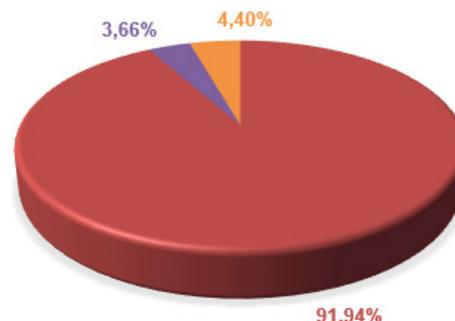


A total of **43,218** comments were received of which **39,579** were received by the set closing date (included in the Excel file as a separate sheet). This report reflects the legitimate entries sent before the closing date.

Question presented;

Do you support this draft amendment to the Meat Safety Act (extended list of animals)?

	Yes, I do	[1,741 selected]	4.40%
	No, I do not	[36,388 selected]	91.94%
	Not fully	[1,450 selected]	3.66%



Comments

The participants are encouraged to provide comment to justify their selection in order to help shape the policy amendment.

Of the “Yes, I do” comments, the common theme is around diversifying the food supply to keep up with the demands of a growing population. It has also come through that many of the game farmer owners would benefit from an additional income source which they could re-purpose to improve land management. Others view that this amendment would bring about improved conservation because the value of the species will increase.

Majority of the “Yes, I do” comments carried conditions, including:

1. Slaughter of the species should be allowed but that they must not suffer any animal cruelty during the process
2. Eating wildy harvested meat is healthy living but the numbers of the species should be monitored thus making it sustainable
3. The species on the list should be farmed locally and not be imported or exported for commercial or farming purposes.
4. Stringent health and safety measures must be applied to avoid contamination from the meat.

Of the “Not Fully” comments, there is a high percentage of participants that agree to a sufficient meat consumption in the traditional form (beef, pork, lamp, fish and ostrich). However, there is a common thread shown to exclude all species that are threatened, endangered or have experience dwindling numbers in their population size. Due to the conservation efforts over the last few years, they feel that certain species' numbers have not yet stabilised therefore to start consuming this species for meat would not be viable.

Majority of the Not Fully comments carried conditions, including:

1. Exclude and endangered or threatened species from the list
2. Local farmers of existing meat sources should be enabled before resorting to consuming wildlife species
3. Local habitat should be protected
4. Animal welfare should be protected to ensure humane slaughter practice
5. Stop or reduce the number of animals available for hunting if these same species are going to be utilised for meat consumption
6. Investigate the possible virus transmissions before passing this amendment.

Of the “No I do not” comments which formed the majority say in this report, the views of the participants support the need to conserve our wildlife and endangered species. It is also mentioned throughout most of the submissions that this amendment will affect the health of the population due to the high risk of disease transmission which led the world into a global pandemic in relation to COVID-19.

Another finding from these views is that the public are questioning the following:

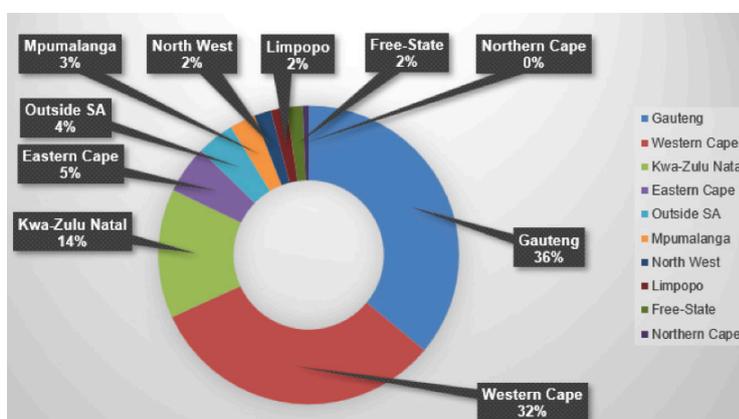
1. What is the reasoning for Government to request this amendment?
2. What secondary effect could this meat consumption have on the illegal rhino horn and ivory trade in South Africa?
3. How does Government intend to ensure continued conservation should this amendment be passed?

Suggestions from the “No I do not” comments, include:

1. Implement a local socio-economic plan to keep existing farmers in production with livestock to fulfil the country's meat demand.
2. Protect and conserve the wildlife as this as a tourism benefit in our country which produces a healthy income for the country.
3. Avoid consumption of animals where disease and virus transmission are a high risk in order to spare the health of South Africans
4. Address the trade industry (lion bone skeletons, ivory, rhino horn, pangolin etc.) for a positive long-term effect before considering any of these “commodity-type” species for consumption.
5. The passing of this amendment will infringe on religious beliefs which will discriminate against the human rights of those that follow their religion.
6. Hunting as in industry brings in a sufficient income, therefore it is not relevant to increase the list of species under the Meat Safety Act.
7. Remove all species listed as threatened or endangered.

Demographics

Comments originated from all provinces with the greatest input arising from Gauteng, followed by Western Cape and KZN. Demographics can be further broken down into comment options (yes, no, not fully) per region.



Thank you

Chloe Roberts - Environmental Expert Coalition

Rob Hutchinson - Dear South Africa