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**IMPACT OF DIPTANK REHABILITATION ON THE OCCURRENCE OF TICK
BORNE DISEASES IN UMZINGWANE DISTRICT MATABELELAND SOUTH**

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ABSTRACT

Tick Infestation and Tick Borne Diseases (TBDs), are important conditions that affect livestock health and productivity in Zimbabwe. Ticks are responsible for the direct damage to livestock hides through feeding habits, damage to udders, teats and scrotum. Ticks transmit a large variety of diseases that affect livestock the major diseases include Babesiosis, Anaplasmosis, Theileriosis and Ehrlichiosis. In order to improve on livestock productivity, effective tick control measures should be taken. The usual way of treating large numbers of animals is to dip them in a plunge dip with a recommended acaricide. The objective of the study was to determine the impact of dip tank rehabilitation on the prevalence of tick borne diseases, as well as determine the socio-economic impact of the program in Umzingwane district. From the selected six dip tanks, 20 farmers per dip tank were interviewed to determine the challenges experienced by farmers before, and changes experienced after the rehabilitation of dip tanks. Data was analysed using SPSS Version 16. And a T-test was used to compare the means of tick borne disease cases before and after dip tank rehabilitation. Ticks were reported to be the most problematic external parasites. Most cattle mortalities were due to TBDs (83.3%), whilst (16.7) being due to blackleg disease. The respondents (50%), highlighted that before rehabilitation the dip tank handling facilities were not intact and there were no head clump at the race, the other 50% reported that in addition to the handling facilities which were not intact there were no footbaths at the dip tanks. All farmers reported that before dip tanks were rehabilitated tick control was poor, due to difficulties in controlling cattle during dipping operation as some cattle would escape undipped. Before the program farmers managed to reduce tick infestation levels by use of tick grease, spraying with an acaricide, use of used engine oil and hand pulling. The farmers (100%) confirmed that ticks were problematic as they spread diseases, caused death of most cattle, as well as teat and udder damages. Most respondents (83%) reported positive changes brought about by the program of dip tank rehabilitation, the changes include; effective tick control and socio-economic benefits whilst (16%) of the respondents mentioned the benefit of effective tick control only. All respondents (100%) appreciated the wise decision by the government and NGO to carry out the rehabilitation exercise.