



## **CULL TRADERS REPORT**

**FOR THE PERIOD 1 APRIL TO 30 JUNE 2023 (2Q2023)**

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

South African poultry farmers are fortunate to have a ready market for their cull birds. Laying hens and broiler breeders that reach the end of their production cycles are sold live off the farms into the informal economy. These transactions create many jobs in townships and rural areas and also contribute significantly to food security. The handling of live birds potentially exposes humans to zoonotic diseases (caused by the spread of pathogens from animals to people). Isolated cases of the transmission of avian influenza to humans continue to be reported globally, with some deaths. Of equal concern is the fact that diseased birds circulating in an area can accelerate the spread of viruses to surrounding poultry flocks.

Following the first outbreak of HPAI in South Africa in June 2017, the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development (DALRRD) introduced regulations to control movement of live birds in an effort to manage the risk posed by their transportation. The task of monitoring the movement of live birds was delegated to the Poultry Disease Management Agency (PDMA).

The prescribed protocol requires farmers to submit a health permit signed by a veterinarian or animal health technician before live birds may be removed off any poultry farm. The permit is valid for five days and once that has elapsed a new one is required to be issued.

A summary of conditions that apply to the granting of removal permits are as follows:

- Farmers wanting to depopulate a flock must contact a registered veterinarian or animal health technician or other delegated authority.
- Flocks must be removed from the farm within five days of the date of the permit.
- The permit does not constitute a movement permit across provincial or international boundaries.
- If any unusual mortality is experienced after removal, the live bird buyer is obliged to stop selling these birds and consult the nearest state veterinary authorities without delay.
- Live birds and eggs on farms within a surveillance zone may not be moved without the express permission of the state veterinarian or other delegated authority.
- DALRRD allows all SAVC-registered veterinarians and animal health technicians to sign the health declarations.

The first winter case of HPAI was reported on a commercial farm in Western Cape on 21 April. Outbreaks have since been confirmed on poultry farms in Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal and Mpumalanga. It is imperative that producers and cull traders comply with these protocols to avoid a catastrophe in 2023.

## 2. FARMER AND TRADER REGISTRATION

The online portal is accessible on the website address <http://www.poultrydiseases.co.za>. Cull traders are required to register on the database and to upload transactional data on a monthly basis. Alternatively, completed sales reconciliation forms can be emailed to Silverpath Consulting ([admin@silverpath.co.za](mailto:admin@silverpath.co.za)). Producers are encouraged to assist traders with online registrations if needed. Producers are requested to email completed removal permits to Silverpath Consulting.

During 2H2017, in the midst of the catastrophic outbreak of HPAI H5N8, a total of 284 poultry companies registered on the PDMA database. These included egg producers, pullet rearers, broiler producers, layer and broiler breeder operations, hatcheries, co-ops, poultry projects and research units. In addition, a total of 8 210 active cull bird traders were listed on the database.

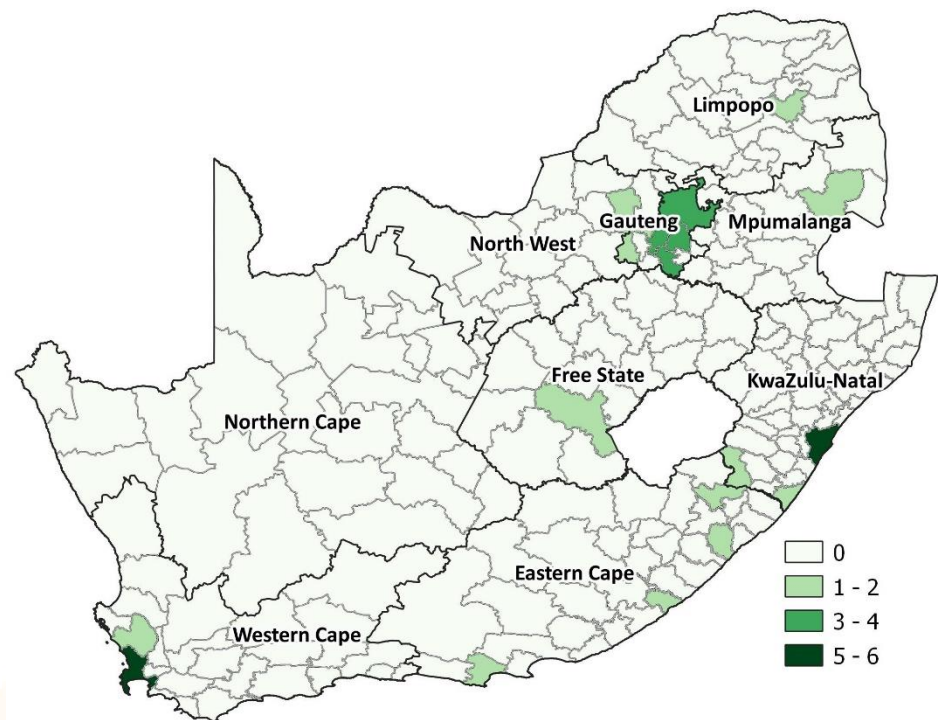
Table 1 provides a breakdown of the registered traders and producers in each province for the previous and current reporting periods. The total number of registrations increased by 73 (+2.5%) during the quarter.

**Table 1: Registered live bird traders and poultry producers**

Traders	1Q2023	2Q2023	Change	% change
Eastern Cape	78	78	0	0.0
Free State	53	54	1	1.9
Gauteng	378	381	3	0.8
KwaZulu-Natal	77	77	0	0.0
Limpopo	888	891	3	0.3
Mpumalanga	86	85	-1	-1.2
North West	196	197	1	0.5
Northern Cape	5	5	0	0.0
Western Cape	122	128	6	4.9
<b>Total traders</b>	<b>1 883</b>	<b>1 896</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>0.7</b>
<b>Producers</b>				
Eastern Cape	61	67	6	9.8
Free State	97	100	3	3.1
Gauteng	170	182	12	7.1
KwaZulu-Natal	132	136	4	3.0
Limpopo	48	56	8	16.7
Mpumalanga	174	176	2	1.1
North West	198	209	11	5.6
Northern Cape	8	8	0	0.0
Western Cape	152	166	14	9.2
<b>Total producers</b>	<b>1 040</b>	<b>1 100</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>5.8</b>
<b>Total registration</b>	<b>2 923</b>	<b>2 996</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>2.5</b>

The distribution of registered cull depots per local municipality is shown in Figure 1. The depots are concentrated in City of Cape Town (6), eThekweni (6), City of Johannesburg (4), City of Tshwane (4), Ekurhuleni (3) and Midvaal (3). In total 40 cull depots are registered on the database.

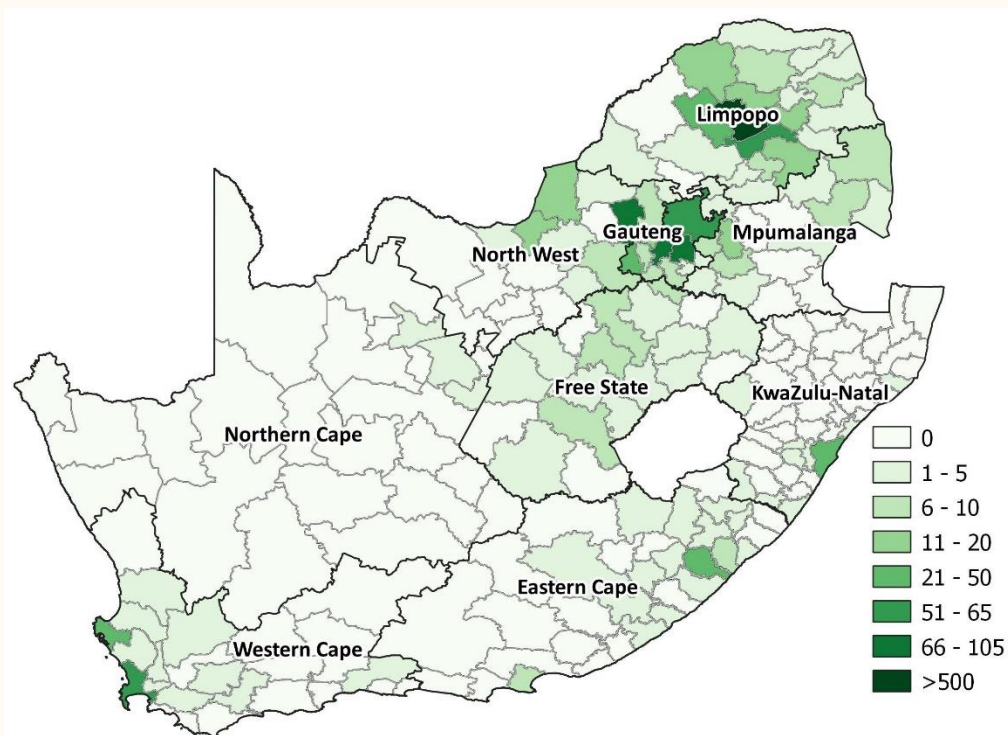
Figure 2 shows the distribution of cull traders per local municipality. The greatest number of traders are to be found in Polokwane (527), followed by City of Johannesburg (105), Rustenburg (91) and Ekurhuleni (88). At this stage 1 613 of the 1 896 cull traders listed on the database have provided their gps coordinates.



Source: SAPA

Created by: Leading Edge Poultry Software

**Figure 1:** Distribution of cull depots per local municipality (2Q2023)



Source: SAPA

Created by: Leading Edge Poultry Software

**Figure 2:** Distribution of cull traders per local municipality (2Q2023)

### 3. LIVE BIRD SALES OFF FARMS

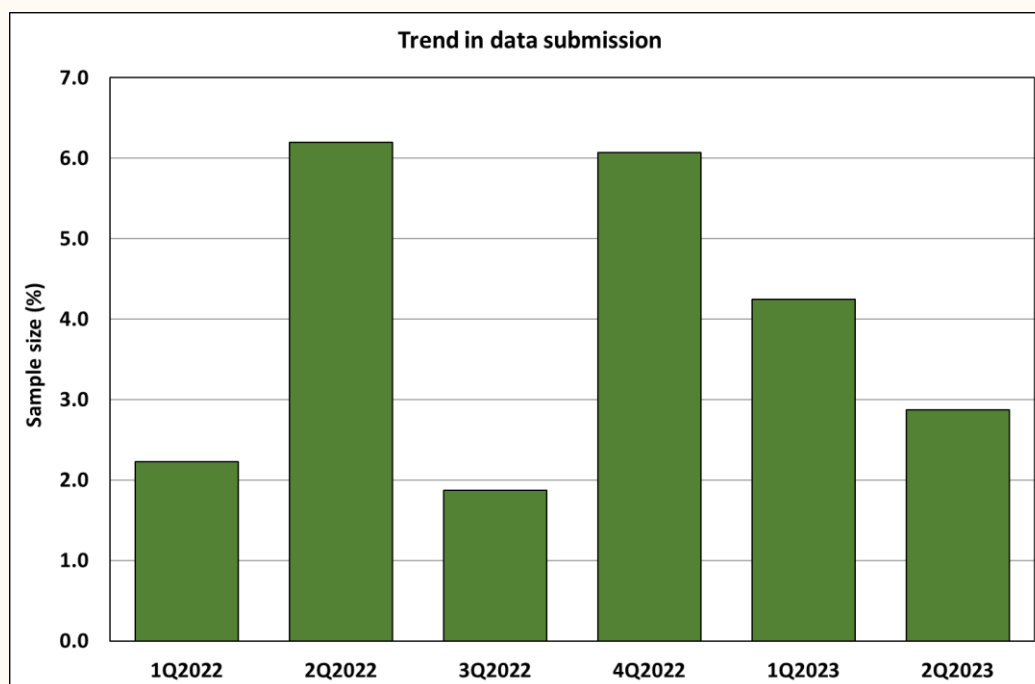
Table 2 shows the number of cull birds that were sold by poultry producers during 2Q2023. This information is obtained from the removal permits issued by the veterinarians and animal health technicians. These figures exclude point-of-lay pullets and broiler breeders transferred from rearing to laying farms.

**Table 2: Summary of culls sold off farm**

Month	Layers		Broiler breeders		Total
	Number	Age (weeks)	Number	Age (weeks)	
Apr-23	97 600	79.0	14 460	66.0	112 060
May-23	50 407	74.0	5 238	66.0	55 645
Jun-23	0	0.0	56 373	63.9	56 373
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>148 007</b>	<b>77.3</b>	<b>76 071</b>	<b>64.4</b>	<b>224 078</b>

According to SAPA's forecasting models, the estimated number of laying hens depopulated during 2Q2023 was 5.52 million; the number reflected here represents 2.7% of the total. The number of broiler breeder hens due for depopulation was forecasted to be 2.28 million; the sample here therefore representing 3.3% of the total.

Figure 3 indicates the size of the sample of data submitted quarterly by producers since 1Q2022, relative to the estimated number of cull birds in the broiler and egg industries.



**Figure 3:** Showing the sample size as a percentage of total industry culls

#### 4. LIVE BIRD DISTRIBUTION

Table 3 summarises the trader statistics for the quarter.

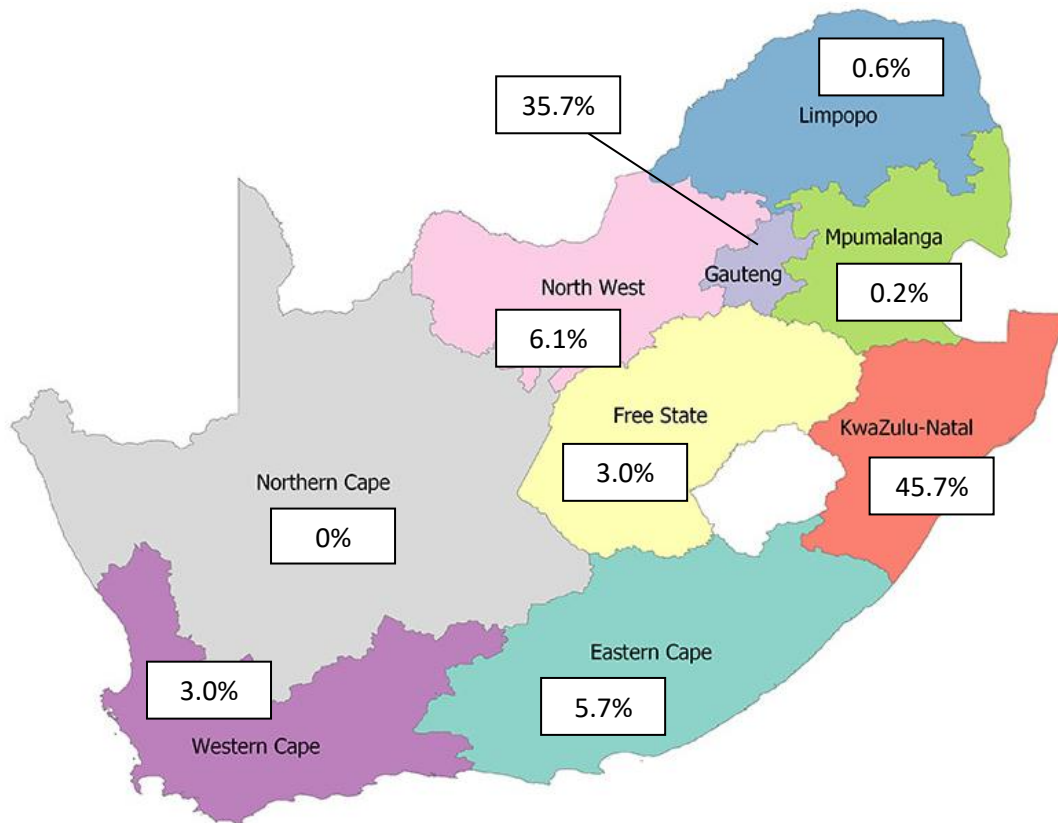
<b>Province</b>	<b>Chickens at start</b>	<b>Chickens bought</b>	<b>Chickens sold</b>	<b>Chickens remaining</b>	<b>Number of deaths</b>
Eastern Cape	0	70 872	70 513	0	359
Free State	0	37 367	37 170	0	197
Gauteng	17 500	447 606	448 778	15 314	1 014
KwaZulu-Natal	215 204	572 335	742 701	43 696	1 142
Limpopo	0	7 888	7 493	5	390
Mpumalanga	0	2 130	2 116	0	14
North West	0	76 991	76 795	0	196
Northern Cape	0	0	0	0	0
Western Cape	1 320	37 508	37 392	1 248	188
<b>Total</b>	<b>234 024</b>	<b>1 252 697</b>	<b>1 422 958</b>	<b>60 263</b>	<b>3 500</b>

Over 1.25 million live birds were purchased by cull traders and 1.42 million birds were distributed into the market during this period. Only 224 078 of these birds were linked to removal permits. Causes of death while in possession of the traders were listed as cold weather, heat stress, trampling, long distance travel, prolapses, unknown disease and bird flu.

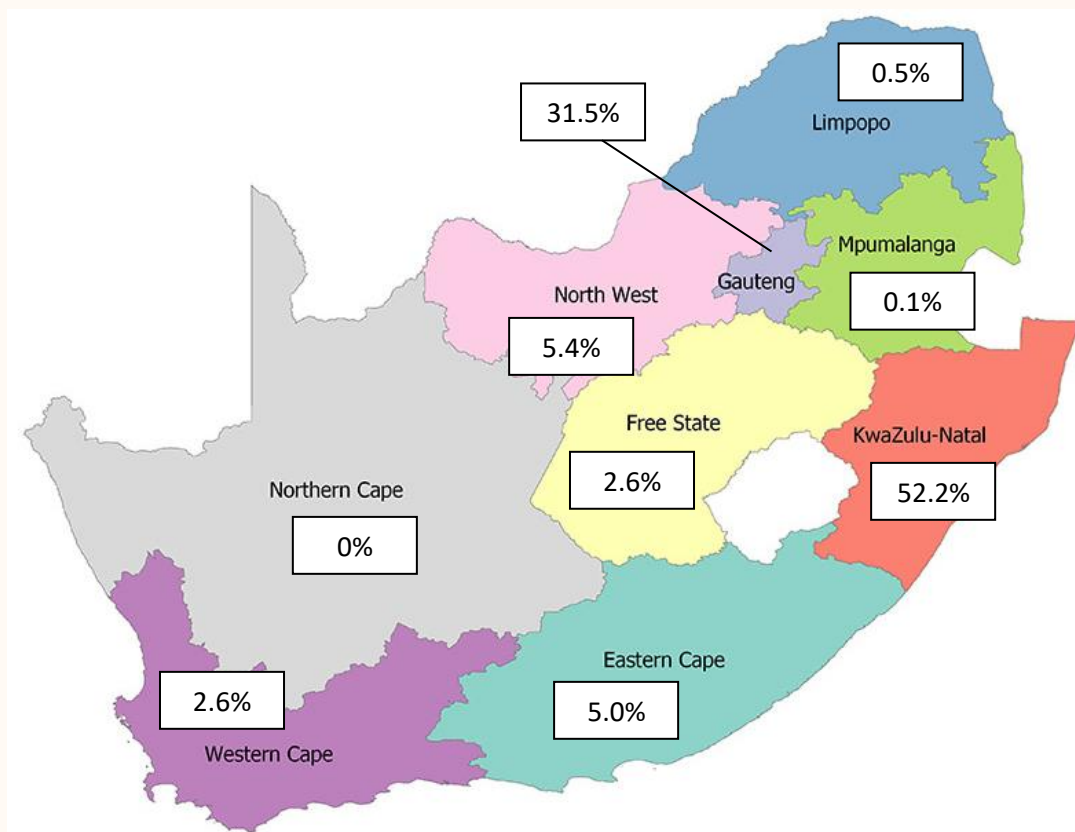
Figure 4 illustrates the provincial distribution of purchases of cull birds from farms during 2Q2023. According to these statistics, KwaZulu-Natal was the centre of activity followed by Gauteng.

Figure 5 shows the provincial distribution of sales of live birds by cull traders to their customers. KwaZulu-Natal reported the highest number of sales, followed by Gauteng.

This data suggests that live birds are mainly sold within the province of purchase and are not transported across provincial borders, although in this quarter some movement of birds between Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal took place. This is potentially a cause for concern given the recent outbreaks of H7N6 in Gauteng (and Mpumalanga).



**Figure 4:** Provincial purchases of cull birds from farms in 2Q2023



**Figure 5:** Provincial sales of cull birds by traders in 2Q2023



## 5. CHALLENGES

It remains a challenge to increase participation in the cull trader monitoring system and in the flow of information to SAPA. As with all statistical surveys, the size of the data set is crucial in determining the precision of the estimates and the usefulness of the reported information to the industry. The objectives of DALRRD and the PDMA are to limit the spread of viruses and to effectively contain outbreaks of avian influenza. The cull trader database has the potential to assist with traceability in the event of outbreaks.

## 6. REQUIRED ACTIONS

SAPA encourages all poultry producers and cull traders to comply with the protocols regulating the movement of live birds, particularly those in the provinces of Free State, Mpumalanga, North West and Western Cape because of their large poultry populations. Limiting the spread of avian influenza is in the interests of the poultry sector and allied industries as well as members of the public. The recent outbreaks of H5 in Western Cape and KwaZulu-Natal and H7 in Gauteng and Mpumalanga should galvanise all participants into action.

Persons needing assistance may contact Cynthia Ncube ([cynthia@silverpath.co.za](mailto:cynthia@silverpath.co.za)) or Louisa Nel ([reception@sapoultry.co.za](mailto:reception@sapoultry.co.za)). The data is processed by Ireen Lekabe, who may be contacted on 011 794 1842 or 067 198 3557.

*Data collated by Silverpath Consulting  
Report compiled by Leading Edge Poultry Software cc*

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