



**CULL TRADERS REPORT
FOR THE PERIOD 1 JULY TO 30 SEPTEMBER 2023 (3Q2023)**

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1. INTRODUCTION

South African poultry farmers 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 commercial and small-scale 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.

With the rapid and uncontrolled spread of H7N6 from the first outbreak in Mpumalanga to neighbouring provinces, producers and cull traders are urged to comply with these protocols.

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). 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. These numbers have changed significantly over the years.

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 decreased by 27 (-0.9%) during the quarter.

Table 1: Registered live bird traders and poultry producers

Traders	2Q2023	3Q2023	Change	% change
Eastern Cape	78	79	1	1.3
Free State	54	54	0	0.0
Gauteng	381	392	11	2.9
KwaZulu-Natal	77	76	-1	-1.3
Limpopo	891	895	4	0.4
Mpumalanga	85	88	3	3.5
North West	197	199	2	1.0
Northern Cape	5	5	0	0.0
Western Cape	128	122	-6	-4.7
Total traders	1 896	1 910	14	0.7
Producers				
Eastern Cape	67	67	0	0.0
Free State	100	97	-3	-3.0
Gauteng	182	170	-12	-6.6
KwaZulu-Natal	136	134	-2	-1.5
Limpopo	56	51	-5	-8.9
Mpumalanga	176	174	-2	-1.1
North West	209	203	-6	-2.9
Northern Cape	8	8	0	0.0
Western Cape	166	155	-11	-6.6
Total producers	1 100	1 059	-41	-3.7
Total registration	2 996	2 969	-27	-0.9

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 (537), followed by City of Johannesburg (114), Rustenburg (96) and Ekurhuleni (91). At this stage 1 672 of the 1 910 cull traders listed on the database have provided their gps coordinates.

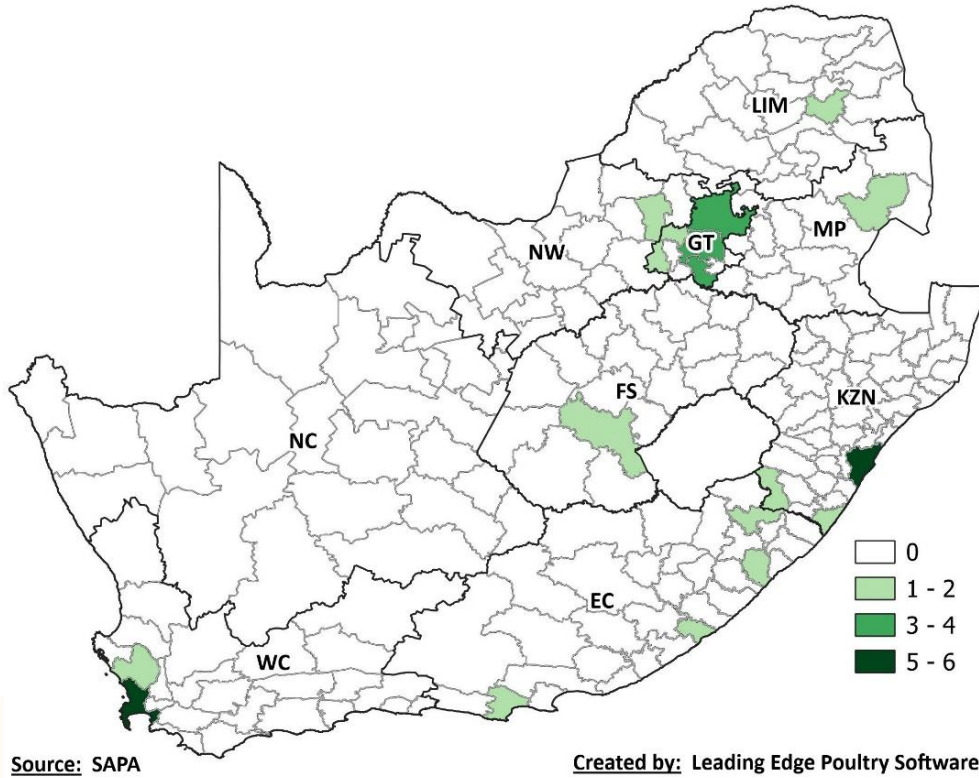


Figure 1: Distribution of cull depots per local municipality (3Q2023)

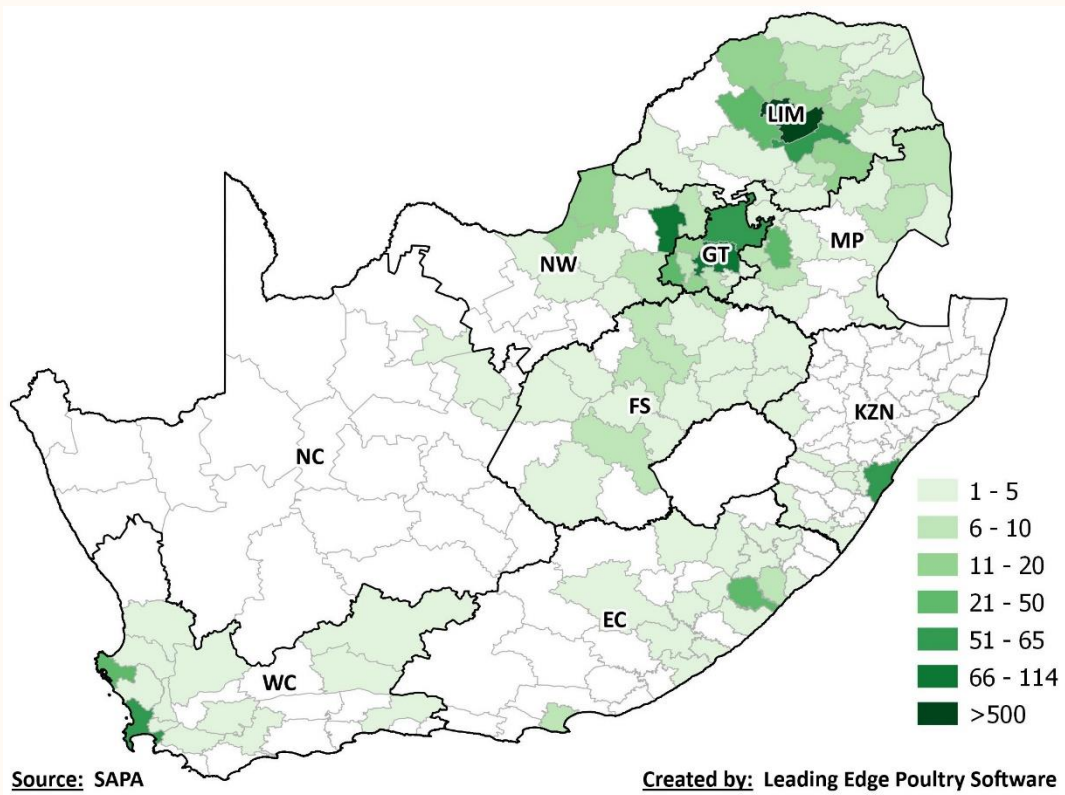


Figure 2: Distribution of cull traders per local municipality (3Q2023)

3. LIVE BIRD SALES OFF FARMS

Table 2 shows the number of cull birds that were sold by poultry producers during 3Q2023. 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 farms

Month	Layers		Broiler breeders		Total
	Number	Age (weeks)	Number	Age (weeks)	
Jul-23	78 000	84.0	43 526	65.1	121 526
Aug-23	70 830	73.3	46 711	63.3	117 541
Sep-23	0	0.0	31 812	62.0	31 812
TOTAL	148 830	78.9	122 049	63.6	270 879

According to SAPA's forecasting models, the estimated number of laying hens depopulated during 3Q2023 was 5.61 million; the number reflected here represents 2.7% of the total. The number of broiler breeder hens due for depopulation was forecasted to be 1.90 million; the sample here therefore representing 6.4% 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.

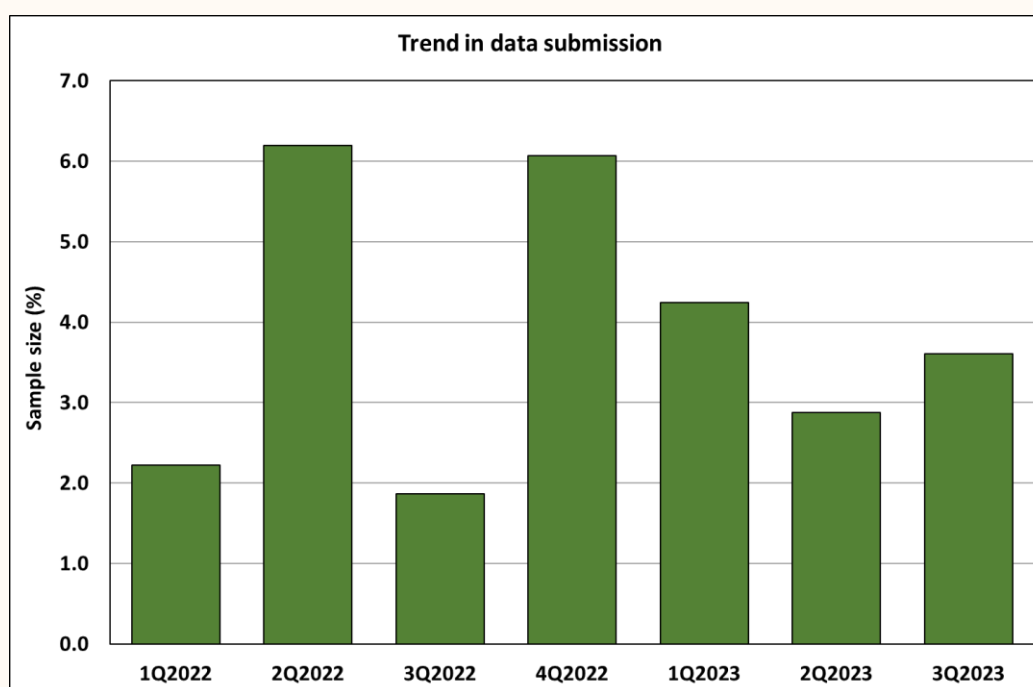


Figure 3: The sample size as a percentage of total industry culls

4. LIVE BIRD DISTRIBUTION

Table 3 summarises the trader statistics for the quarter.

Province	Chickens at start	Chickens bought	Chickens sold	Chickens remaining	Number of deaths
Eastern Cape	0	160 347	153 052	6 335	960
Free State	0	23 674	23 504	0	170
Gauteng	32 070	244 933	275 392	0	1 611
KwaZulu-Natal	37 622	257 619	286 126	9 038	77
Limpopo	20	11 775	11 726	1	68
Mpumalanga	0	3 825	3 775	5	45
North West	12	47 131	46 972	0	171
Northern Cape	0	0	0	0	0
Western Cape	1 849	28 503	29 494	628	230
Total	71 573	777 807	830 041	16 007	3 332

Almost 778 000 live birds were purchased by cull traders and 830 000 birds were distributed into the market during this period. Only 271 000 of these birds were linked to removal permits. The number of chickens bought from producers (777 807) represents 10.4% of the estimated total number of birds depopulated (7.51 million).

Causes of death while in possession of the traders were listed as cold weather, heat stress, trampling, long distance travel, prolapses and unknown diseases. In addition, several hens died of 'chicken flu and swollen head'.

Figure 4 illustrates the provincial distribution of purchases of cull birds from farms during 3Q2023. According to these statistics, KwaZulu-Natal and Gauteng were the centres of activity.

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 in 3Q2023 live birds were mainly sold within the province of purchase and were not transported across provincial borders.

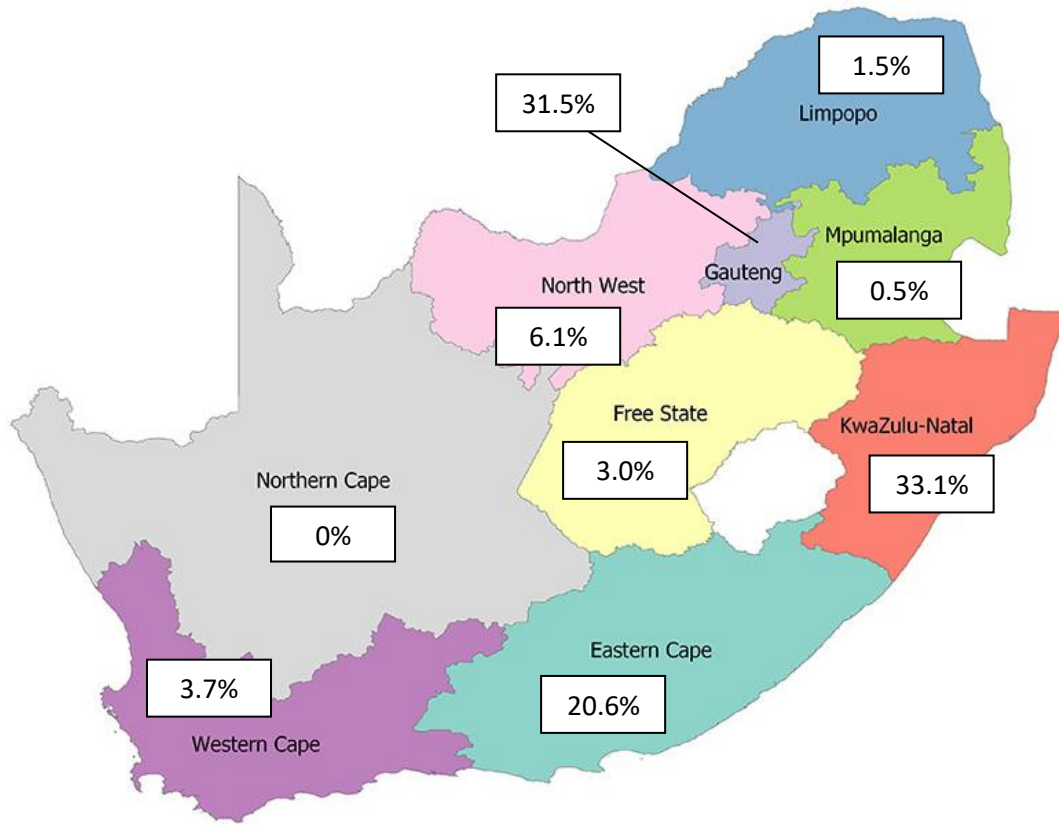


Figure 4: Provincial purchases of cull birds from farms in 3Q2023

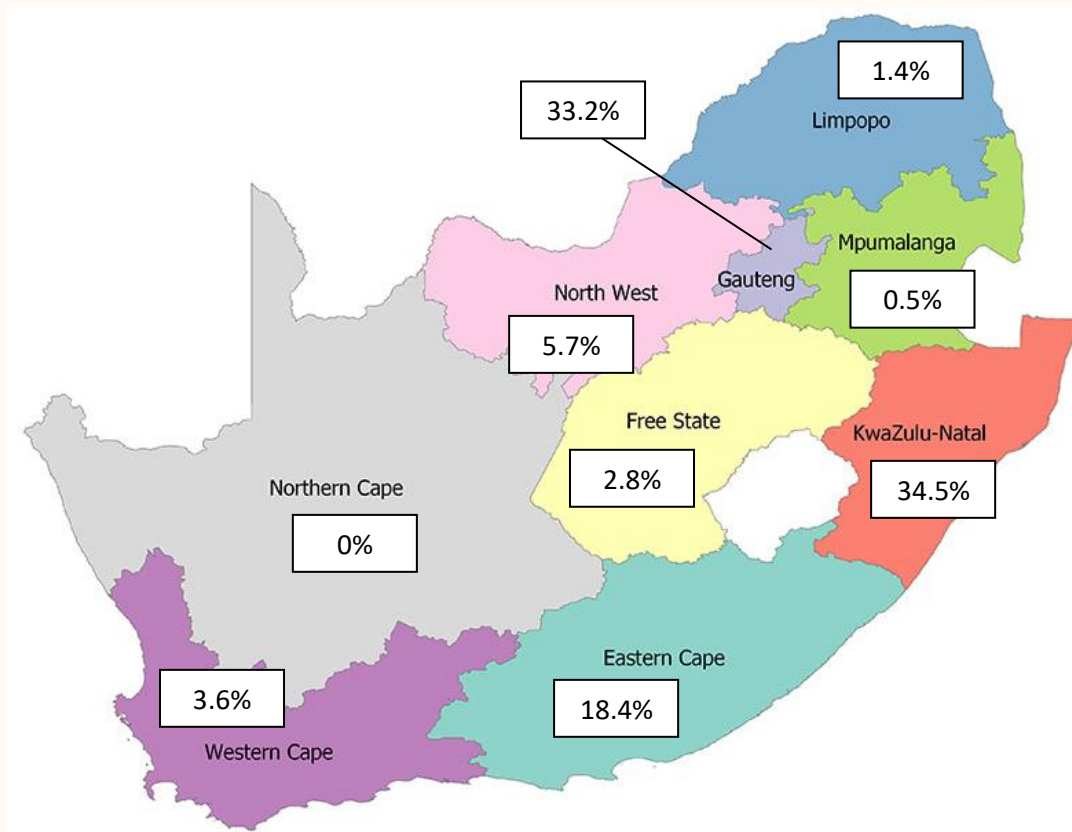


Figure 5: Provincial sales of cull birds by traders in 3Q2023

5. CHALLENGES

It remains a challenge to increase participation in the cull trader monitoring system and to improve the flow of information to SAPA. 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 when HPAI is diagnosed on a farm or cull trader's premises.

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 Mpumalanga, Gauteng, Limpopo and North West where the H7N6 subtype has caused catastrophic damage since June.

Controlling the spread of avian influenza is in the interests of the poultry sector and allied industries as well as members of the public.

Persons needing assistance may contact Cynthia Ncube (cynthia@silverpath.co.za) or Louisa Nel (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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