



## **REPORT ON AVIAN INFLUENZA (AI)**

### **SURVEILLANCE MONITORING FOR THE SURVEILLANCE PERIOD**

**July to September 2025**

**(3Q2025)**

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

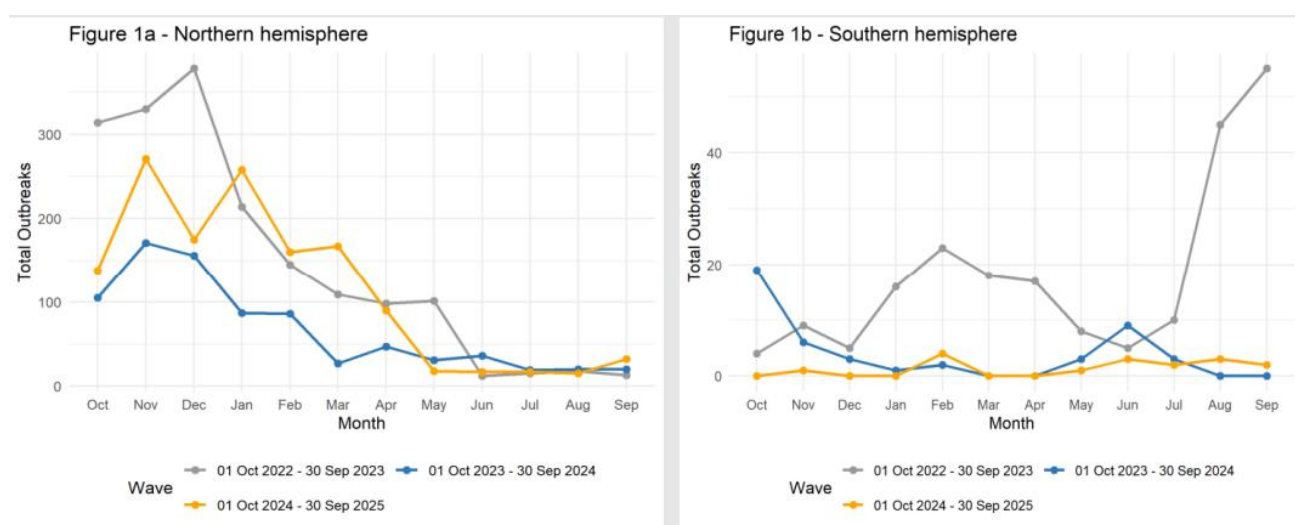
### 1.1. Summary of WOAHP report to end September 2025

Since its inception in China in 1996, there have been multiple waves of intercontinental transmission of the H5Nx Gs/GD lineage virus. HPAI has led to the death and mass slaughter of over 633 million poultry worldwide between 2005 and 2024, with a peak of 146 million in 2022. During the peak in 2022, 84 countries were affected with HPAI. In 2024, 82 countries were affected. Since 2003 there have been more than 2 500 human cases of avian influenza caused by a range of strains. In poultry the HPAI H5N1 clade 2.3.4.4b strain predominates.

Highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) outbreaks are reported by the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH) in a cycle starting in October and ending in September – which means that September 2025 represents the last month in the most recent cycle of the disease.

Table 1 is taken from the 75<sup>th</sup> Situation Report on HPAI published recently by the WOAHP. It is clear from the summary that HPAI outbreaks are continuing worldwide. Figure 1 shows the number of outbreaks of HPAI over the last 12-month period.

Table 1: Global HPAI outbreaks reported to WOAHP			
	1 Oct 2022 - 30 Sep 2023	1 Oct 2023 - 30 Sep 2024	1 Oct 2024 - 30 Sep 2025
<b>Poultry</b>			
Countries and territories	48	39	49
Outbreaks	1 962	851	1 374
<b>Wild birds</b>			
Countries and territories	64	55	52
Outbreaks	3 994	1 076	1 834



**Figure 1: HPAI outbreaks in the Northern and Southern Hemispheres**

The figure above shows the strong seasonality of HPAI outbreaks in the Northern Hemisphere, with the number of cases expected to increase again in October as the Northern Hemisphere winter approaches. Southern Hemisphere outbreaks exclude Indonesia and as a result show far lower numbers, limited seasonality and are strongly influenced by South African data. Our own experience shows that HPAI outbreaks mostly occur in South Africa between April and November each year, with few cases reported during summer months. No new cases were reported in Africa in the quarter under review. (Source: HPAI Situation Report 75, published by WOAHA in October 2025).

## **1.2. South Africa**

Details of the present H5N1 outbreak are given in section 2 of this document. The outbreak has been relatively contained compared to the previous outbreaks that the country has experienced. The reason for this is not known, one could speculate that biosecurity measures have been more effective than in previous years but that is not clear. Sequencing data indicates that wild birds are the primary source of the outbreaks and that wild bird populations must be seen as a high risk to poultry.

At the time of writing more than 50 complete viral genomes from the current outbreaks in wild birds and poultry have been sequenced by the University of Pretoria, representing a new introduction of viruses into South Africa from Europe in 2025, and are not a continuation of any previous outbreaks.

## **1.3. HPAI Vaccination**

One broiler breeder farm complex has been approved for HPAI vaccination in South Africa, using the existing HPAI vaccination protocol. Indications are that vaccination has proceeded.

Despite promises that South Africa is going to vaccinate against HPAI, no other companies have been approved to vaccinate. An avian influenza task team, comprising scientists and veterinarians from the Agricultural Research Council, the Department of Agriculture and the Faculty of Veterinary Science of the University of Pretoria, was appointed by the Minister of Agriculture in June this year. The task team has been unable to make progress with its task as at the date of writing no formal terms of reference have been received, nor has the exact composition of the team been finalised.

No discussions have been held between the Director of Animal Health and the SAPA task team in the past five months.

Progress on HPAI vaccination in South Africa is at a standstill.

## **1.4. Layer flocks which have been challenged with H7N6 but not culled**

No final word has been received from government concerning infected but not culled commercial layer flocks. Because this matter has not been finally resolved, the H7N6 outbreak remains officially active. It is unlikely that any birds previously infected with H7N6 remain alive.

### 1.5. Low pathogenicity avian influenza – H9N2 strain

A case of H9 LPAI was reported in Maputo province of Mozambique on the 28<sup>th</sup> of August this year. Additional control measures were put into place, and no further reports of the disease have been published. It is concerning that a case of H9 avian influenza has been detected so close to South Africa and means that outbreaks in South Africa are likely in the foreseeable future. H9 avian influenza is well established across North Africa and the Middle East and there have been rumours of cases in various eastern and southern African countries.

Although defined as an LPAI strain, H9N2 has been associated with serious production losses in commercial laying hens and increased mortality in broiler flocks. The Director of Animal Health indicated in a letter to SAPA on 19<sup>th</sup> September that vaccination against H9 would not be prevented, but that vaccines would need to be registered and approved for use with monitoring protocols similar to those used when H6 vaccines were used in South Africa. Nonetheless there is a good chance that there will be a period between the arrival of H9 LPAI and the registration of the first vaccines during which the industry will be at serious risk from the disease.

## 2. RESULTS OF AI SURVEILLANCE MONITORING

### 2.1. Reported HPAI outbreaks

Three outbreaks of H5N1 were reported in June 2025; one in each of the provinces of Mpumalanga, North West and Western Cape. Two of the outbreaks occurred in broiler breeder flocks, with the third affecting a free-range duck farm.

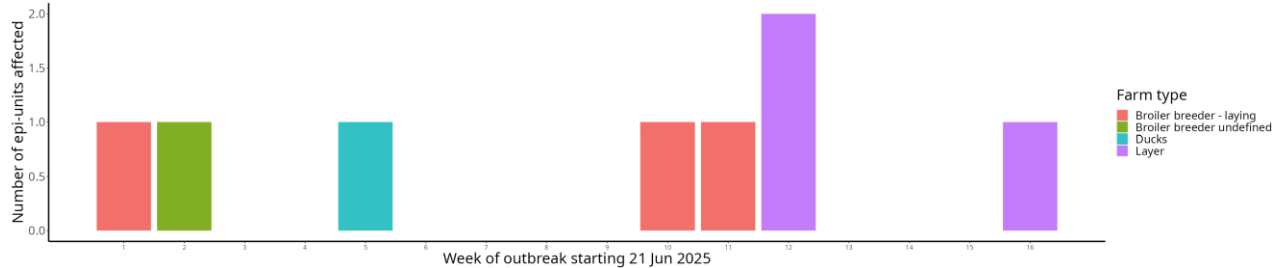
In the third quarter, a further 5 outbreaks occurred in domestic birds in Eastern Cape (1), Mpumalanga (2) and Western Cape (2).

To date, 4 broiler breeder and 3 commercial layer units have been affected. The estimated number of culls is indicated in Table 2.

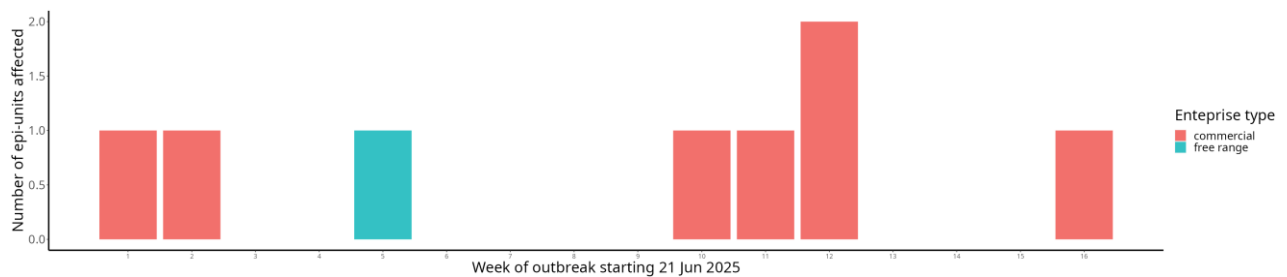
Table 2: Birds culled per province			
Province	Broiler breeders	Commercial layers	Total
E. Cape	9 883		9 883
Free State			0
Gauteng			0
KwaZulu-Natal			0
Limpopo			0
Mpumalanga	72 000	280 000	352 000
North West	200 000		200 000
N. Cape			0
W. Cape	8 250	280 000	288 250
<b>National</b>	<b>290 133</b>	<b>560 000</b>	<b>850 133</b>

## 2.2. Temporal and spatial distribution of the HPAI H5N1 outbreaks in South Africa

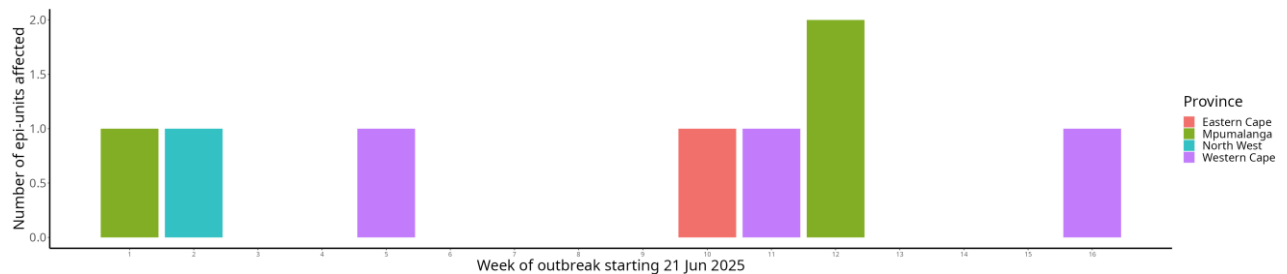
Figures 2-5 show the epidemic curves per farm type, enterprise type, province and municipality, for the five-week period from 21 June to 2 October 2025.



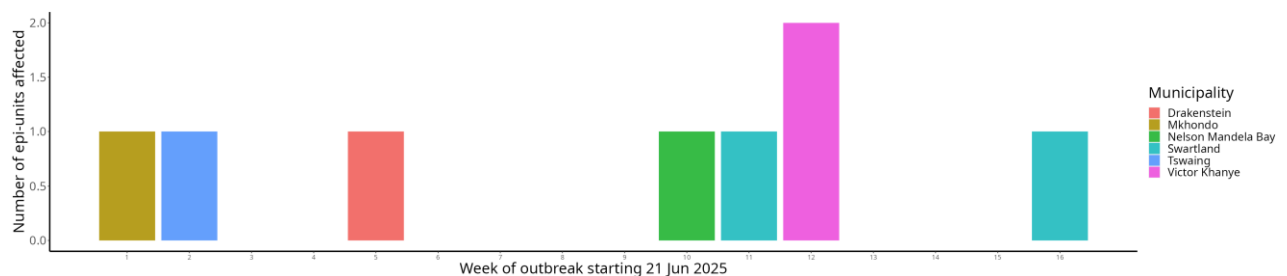
**Figure 2: H5N1 epidemic curve classified according to farm type (21 Jun – 2 Oct 2025)**



**Figure 3: H5N1 epidemic curve classified according to enterprise type (21 Jun – 2 Oct 2025)**



**Figure 4: H5N1 epidemic curve classified according to province (21 Jun – 2 Oct 2025)**



**Figure 5: H5N1 epidemic curve classified according to municipality (21 Jun – 2 Oct 2025)**

Figures 6 and 7 show the outbreak density and spread respectively. The first outbreak occurred in Mpumalanga, and the most recent in Western Cape.



Figure 6: H5N1 outbreak density (21 Jun – 2 Oct 2025)



Figure 7: H5N1 outbreak spread (21 Jun – 2 Oct 2025)

2.3. AI surveillance programme

Table 3 summarises the AI test results of farms that submitted data during the reporting period. The total number of samples tested increased from 38 262 in 2Q2025 to 41 403. These figures change from time to

time due to ongoing submissions of data. The number of broiler industry farms submitting samples decreased from 313 to 304, while the number of egg industry farms submitting samples decreased from 26 to 16. Of the samples tested during 3Q2025, 199 (0.5%) were positive.

<b>Table 3: AI test results</b>					
<b>PROVINCE</b>	<b>FARM TYPE</b>		<b>SAMPLES</b>		
	Broiler industry	Egg industry	Tested	Positive (ELISA)	Negative
Eastern Cape	31	0	3 197	0	3 197
Free State	37	0	5 688	0	5 688
Gauteng	25	5	5 333	14	5 319
KwaZulu-Natal	67	1	8 038	155	7 883
Limpopo	22	1	1 793	0	1 793
Mpumalanga	19	1	5 572	28	5 544
North West	75	7	9 658	2	9 656
Northern Cape	1	0	100	0	100
Western Cape	27	1	2 024	0	2 024
<b>National</b>	<b>304</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>41 403</b>	<b>199</b>	<b>41 204</b>

A positive ELISA test does not necessarily indicate a true outbreak. All ELISA results must be verified using haemagglutination inhibition (HI) testing which also confirms which strain of AI is involved. Further confirmation is done using PCR, molecular sequencing and on occasion, virus isolation. False positive results on the ELISA test may run at about 1–2%.

Table 4 gives a breakdown of the number of chicken farms that participated in the AI surveillance monitoring during the quarter under review.

<b>Table 4: Number of farms that participated</b>	
<b>Broiler industry</b>	
GGP and grandparent farms	17
Parent rearing farms	46
Broiler breeder farms	83
Broiler rearing farms	158
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>304</b>
<b>Egg industry</b>	
Grandparent farms	2
Parent rearing farms	0
Layer breeder farms	7
Pullet rearing farms	6
Layers (table egg production)	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>BROILER AND EGG INDUSTRIES</b>	<b>320</b>

Table 5 indicates the total number of farms that did not participate during the quarter under review. Farms



that are not exporting are only required to submit samples twice a year.

Table 5: Number of farms that did not submit AI test results		
PROVINCE	FARM TYPE	
	Broiler industry	Egg industry
Eastern Cape	11	12
Free State	17	35
Gauteng	61	51
KwaZulu-Natal	32	38
Limpopo	12	23
Mpumalanga	112	26
North West	68	38
Northern Cape	1	5
Western Cape	76	37
<b>National</b>	<b>390</b>	<b>265</b>

Figure 8 shows the density of chicken farms weighted according to the number of birds on each farm. The heat map has been generated by specifying that an area be coloured according to the vicinity of neighbouring farms within a 20 km radius. The purpose of this map is to identify potential hotspots where the possibility for transmission of the avian influenza virus is higher. The relative risk of transmission is low in the green areas, moderate in the yellow areas and high in the red areas.

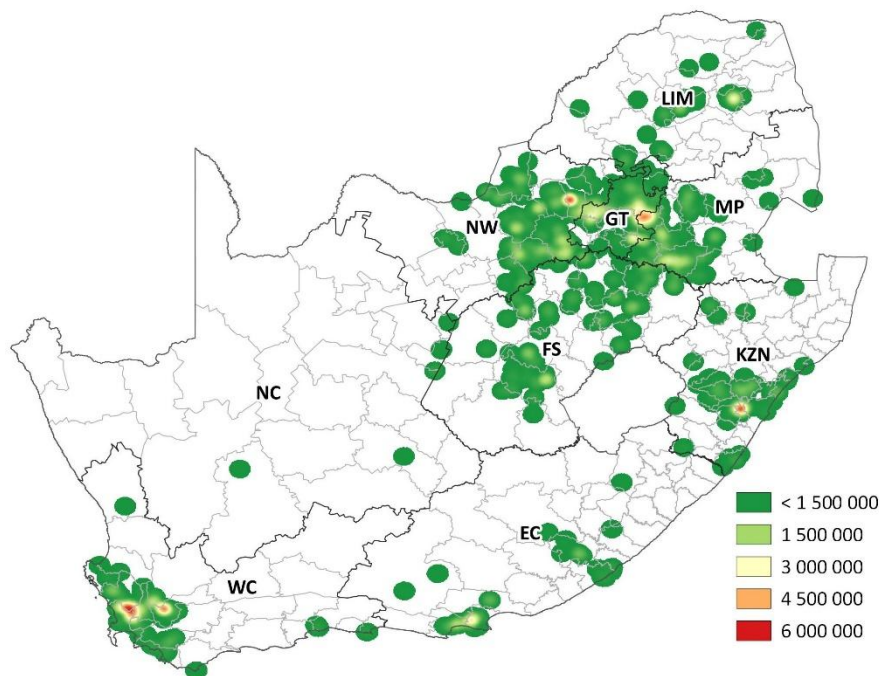


Figure 8: Heat map illustrating the density of chicken farms

### 3. AVIAN INFLUENZA MONITORING IN SOUTH AFRICA

SAPA is an active participant in the surveillance monitoring process for avian influenza in the national poultry flock. Surveillance is conducted on a monthly basis for ZA compartments (export facilities) and on a six-monthly basis for non-ZA compartments, according to a prescribed protocol. All producers are encouraged to participate in this programme.

Producers are requested to ensure that the **AI monitoring database update input sheet** is filled in accurately with every submission. Of particular importance are:

- the geographical location (gps coordinates) of the farm;
- the type of poultry; and
- the average number of chickens currently on the farm.

Silverpath Consulting continues to focus on improving the quality of the information in the AI database.

### 4. CONCLUSION

Sporadic outbreaks of H5N1 across South Africa continue to be a cause for concern. In the absence of widespread vaccine administration, tight biosecurity and controlled movement of birds are advised.

### 5. SAPA CONTACT DETAILS

Silverpath Consulting is contracted to SAPA to collate the information regarding avian influenza and thus to contact poultry farmers in order to solicit the required information. Ms Idah Mosweu conducts these surveys and we request the industry to cooperate with the process. She can be contacted on the cell phone number 078 951 6937 or land line 011 794 1842 during working hours. Alternatively use the e-mail address: [diseasereports@sapoultry.co.za](mailto:diseasereports@sapoultry.co.za).

*Data collated by Silverpath Consulting*

*Report compiled by Leading Edge Poultry Software*

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