



**CULL TRADERS REPORT**  
**FOR THE PERIOD 1 JANUARY TO 31 MARCH 2026**  
**(1Q2026)**

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The transportation of live animals off farms creates opportunities for the spread of pathogens across South Africa, putting the health of livestock in disease-free areas at risk. With cases of HPAI confirmed in Eastern Cape, Mpumalanga, North West and Western Cape in the last half of 2025, the country is on high alert, and producers should be implementing strict biosecurity measures, including limited movement of birds.

The negative impacts of HPAI disease outbreaks are on local production, pricing, consumption, trade and livelihoods. Robust biosecurity measures continue to be made by experts and various organisations, for the long-term sustainability of the agricultural sector. Currently one integrated producer has been granted permission to vaccinate, and has implemented this, and SAPA is negotiating the biosecurity protocols to allow more producers the opportunity to vaccinate. This will prevent huge losses to the disease due to mortality and enforced culling, which have previously been devastating for South Africa, and should reduce the viral load in the country, benefiting smaller producers who do not meet the criteria for vaccination. However, vaccination necessitates the need for surveillance to observe the effectiveness of vaccination and enable trade.

Regulations to control the movement of live birds were introduced by the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development (DALRRD) in 2017 in response to the HPAI H5N8 outbreaks, and it is important that these protocols are observed.

### Protocol

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.

## 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. These numbers have changed over the years.

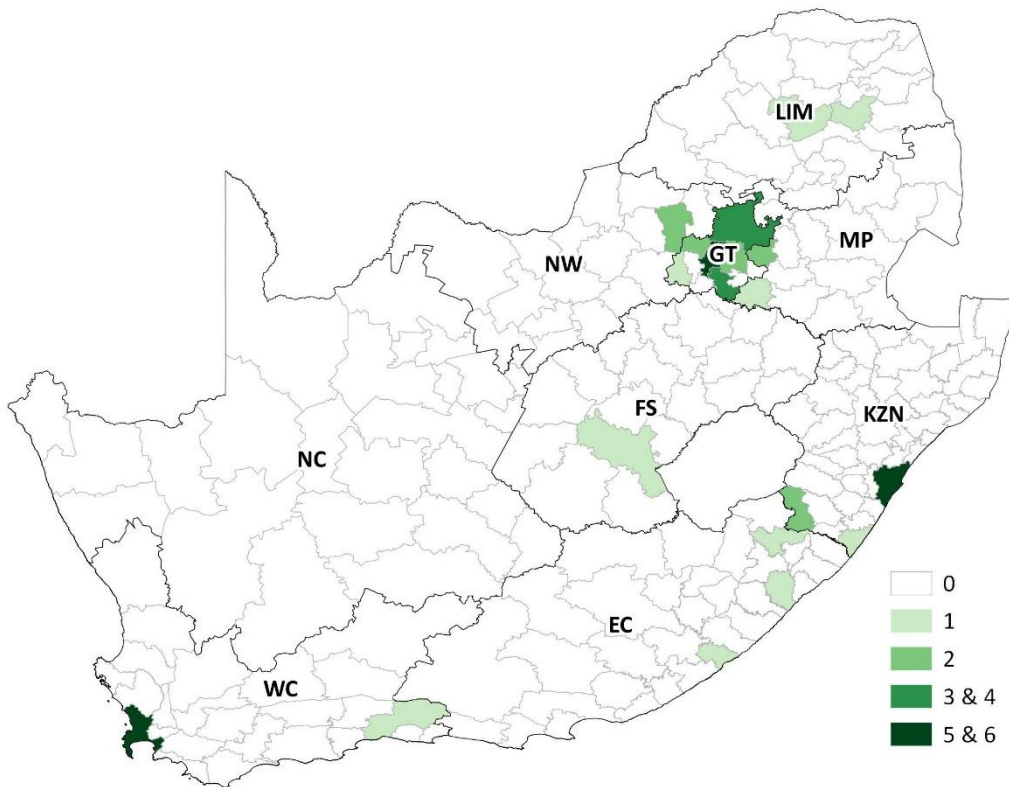
Table 1 provides a breakdown of the registered traders and producers in each province for the previous and current reporting periods. The total number of registrations increased by 470 (+17.4%) during the quarter. Of the 1985 traders on the database, only 139 (7.0%) submitted data in 1Q2026. Similarly, of the 1 179 producers on the database 67 (5.7%) were involved in transactions reported during 1Q2026.

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

Traders	4Q2025	1Q2026	Change	% change
Eastern Cape	82	87	5	6.1
Free State	49	54	5	10.2
Gauteng	395	436	41	10.4
KwaZulu-Natal	58	77	19	32.8
Limpopo	705	912	207	29.4
Mpumalanga	84	94	10	11.9
North West	187	200	13	7.0
Northern Cape	5	5	0	0.0
Western Cape	110	120	10	9.1
<b>Total traders</b>	<b>1 675</b>	<b>1 985</b>	<b>310</b>	<b>18.5</b>
<b>Producers</b>				
Eastern Cape	57	64	7	12.3
Free State	96	108	12	12.5
Gauteng	150	200	50	33.3
KwaZulu-Natal	143	167	24	16.8
Limpopo	61	72	11	18.0
Mpumalanga	159	167	8	5.0
North West	192	211	19	9.9
Northern Cape	9	8	-1	-11.1
Western Cape	152	182	30	19.7
<b>Total producers</b>	<b>1 019</b>	<b>1 179</b>	<b>160</b>	<b>15.7</b>
<b>Total registration</b>	<b>2 694</b>	<b>3 164</b>	<b>470</b>	<b>17.4</b>

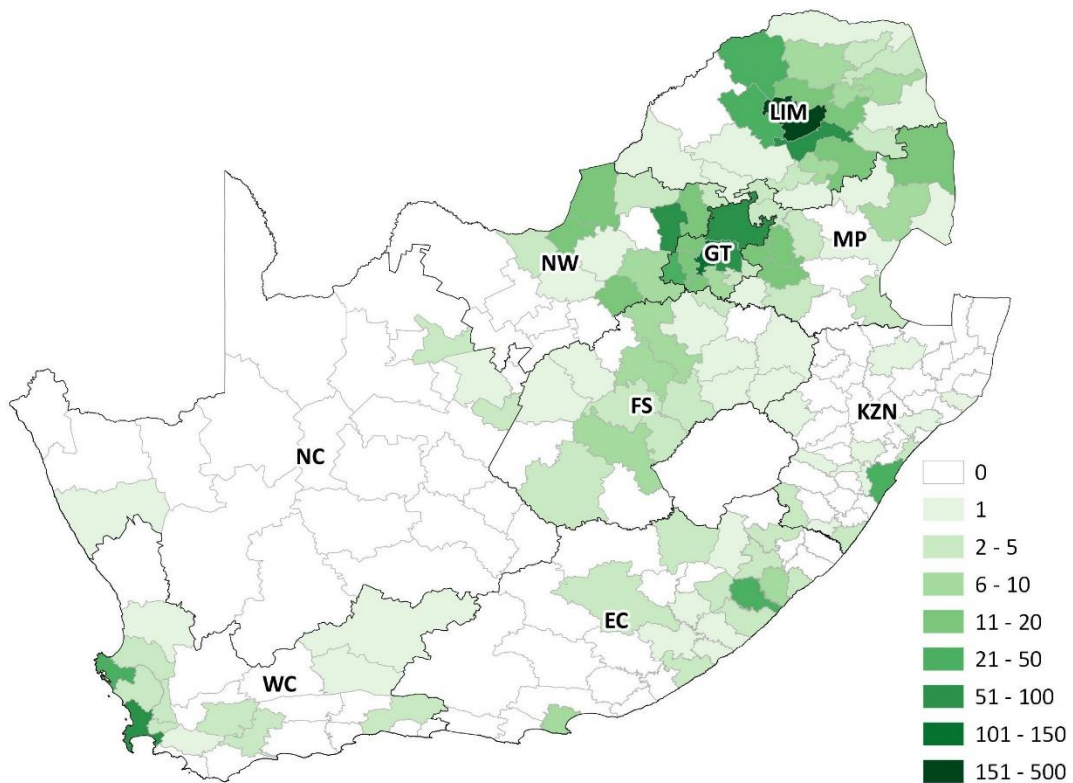
The distribution of registered cull depots per local municipality is shown in Figure 1. The depots are concentrated in eThekweni (6), City of Cape Town (5), City of Johannesburg (5), City of Tshwane (4) and Midvaal (3). In total 43 cull depots were registered on the database in 1Q2026. Twenty of the 43 registered cull depots (46.5%) were active participants during the quarter under review.

Figure 2 shows the distribution of cull traders per local municipality. The greatest numbers of traders are to be found in Polokwane (482), City of Johannesburg (137), Rustenburg (97), Ekurhuleni (94) and City of Tshwane (78).



Source: SAPA

Figure 1: Distribution of cull depots per local municipality



Source: SAPA

Figure 2: Distribution of cull traders per local municipality

### 3. LIVE BIRD SALES OFF FARMS

Table 2 shows the number of cull birds that were sold by poultry producers during 1Q2026. 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)	
Jan-26	0	0.0	23 291	65.0	23 291
Feb-26	0	0.0	38 513	62.4	38 513
Mar-26	0	0.0	17 988	63.6	17 988
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>79 792</b>	<b>63.4</b>	<b>79 792</b>

### 4. LIVE BIRD DISTRIBUTION

Table 3 summarises the trader statistics for the quarter. The data in Table 4 indicates the amount of movement of cull birds across provincial and municipal boundaries. The reported causes of death are given in Table 5. The reported deaths due to avian influenza are unconfirmed diagnoses.

**Table 3: Reconciliation of trader statistics**

Province	Chickens at start	Chickens bought	Chickens sold	Chickens remaining	Number of deaths
Eastern Cape	0	190 640	189 707	0	933
Free State	0	5 853	5 796	0	57
Gauteng	1 636	485 142	482 295	1 558	2 925
KwaZulu-Natal	0	184 665	184 576	0	89
Limpopo	0	31 107	30 941	0	166
Mpumalanga	0	10 520	10 180	0	340
North West	0	61 861	61 650	0	211
Northern Cape	0	0	0	0	0
Western Cape	437	78 744	77 481	1 268	432
<b>Total</b>	<b>2 073</b>	<b>1 048 532</b>	<b>1 042 626</b>	<b>2 826</b>	<b>5 153</b>

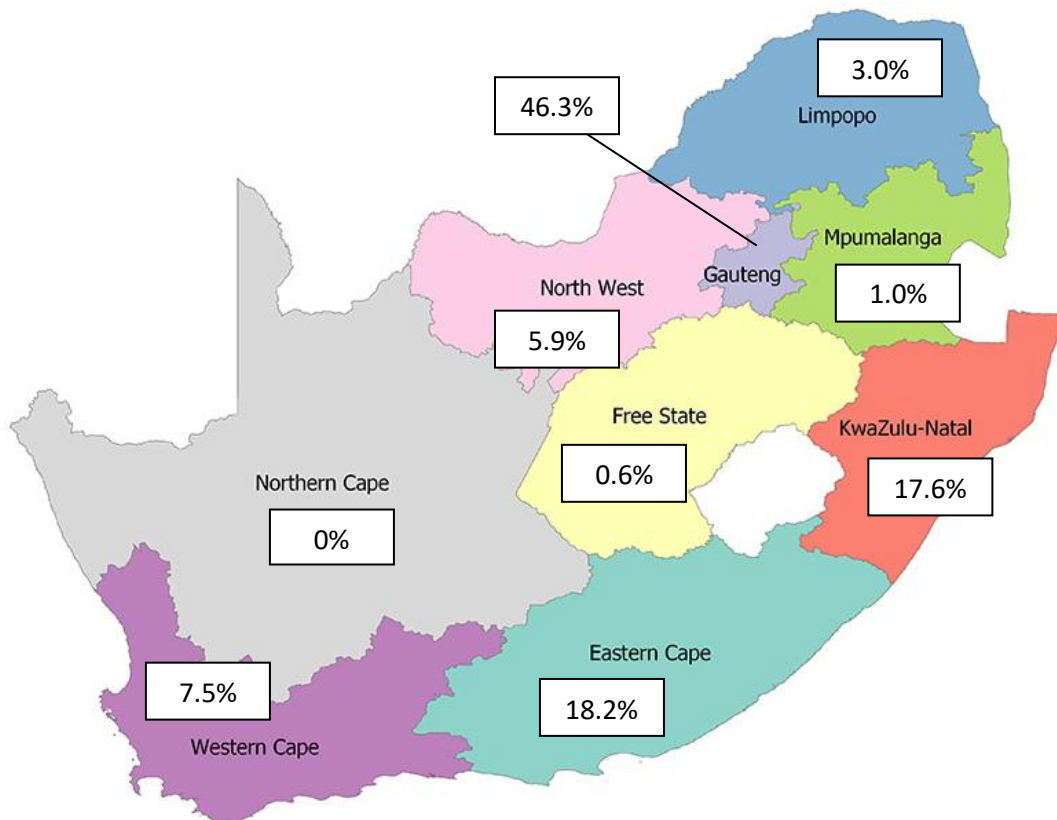
**Table 4: Movement of culls between boundaries**

Sales channel	Within province (%)	Outside province (%)	Total (%)	Within municipality (%)	Outside municipality (%)	Total (%)
Farms to traders	25.2%	74.8%	100.0	2.7%	97.3%	100.0
Traders to consumers	99.5%	0.5%	100.0	77.2%	22.8%	100.0
Farms to depots	65.6%	34.4%	100.0	4.1%	95.9%	100.0
Depots to consumers	73.8%	26.2%	100.0	73.3%	26.7%	100.0

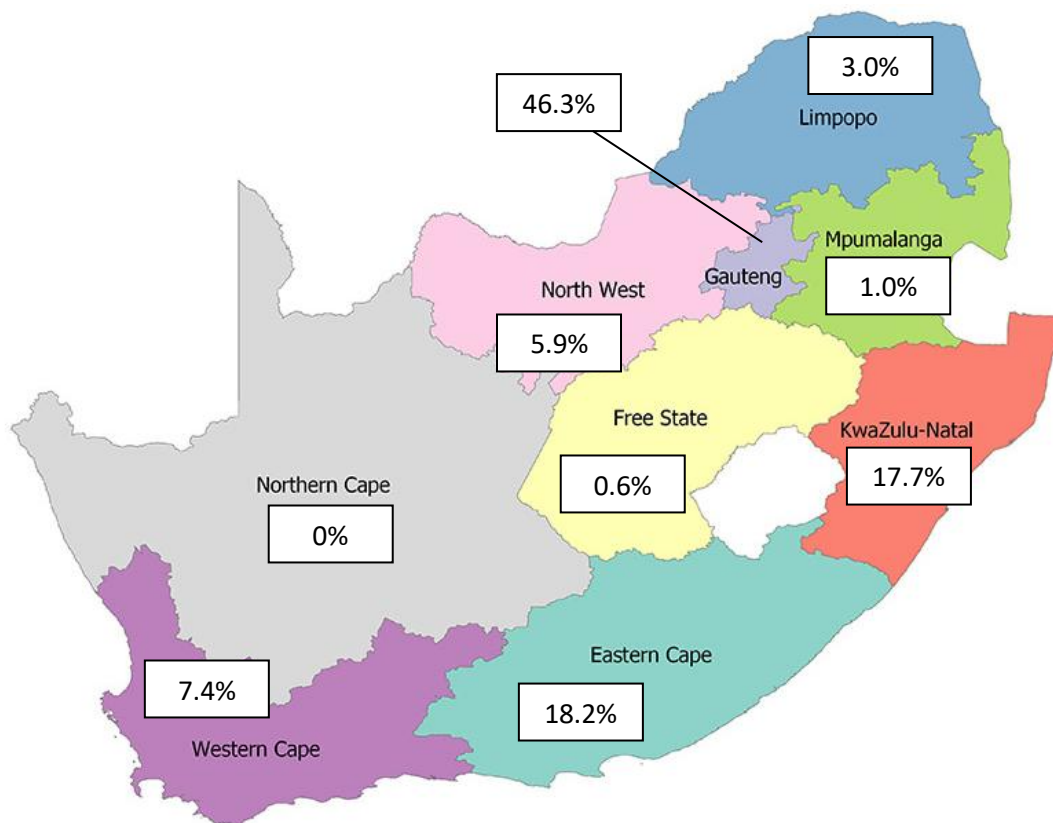
**Table 5: Suspected causes of death**

Cause	Number of birds	%
Avian influenza	0	0.0
Distance travelled	0	0.0
Hot weather	1 329	25.8
No sign of illness	323	6.3
Prolapse	188	3.6
Slaughtered	116	2.3
Stress	57	1.1
Trampling	0	0.0
Undiagnosed disease	256	5.0
Other	2 884	56.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>5 153</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Figure 3 illustrates the provincial distribution of purchases of cull birds from farms during the quarter. Figure 4 shows the provincial distribution of sales of live birds by cull traders to their customers.



**Figure 3: Provincial purchases of cull birds from farms**



**Figure 4: Provincial sales of cull birds by traders**

**5. CHALLENGES**

It remains a challenge to increase participation in the cull trader monitoring system and to improve the flow of information to SAPA. Silverpath Consulting continues to engage with traders and depots in efforts to expand and improve the database.

**6. REQUIRED ACTIONS**

SAPA encourages all poultry producers and cull traders to comply with the protocols regulating the movement of live birds.

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.

The following link contains information regarding regulations for transporting poultry:

<https://www.sapoultry.co.za/pdf-docs/code-practice-poultry-transportation.pdf>

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

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