



REPORT ON AVIAN INFLUENZA (AI)

SURVEILLANCE MONITORING FOR THE SURVEILLANCE PERIOD

April to June 2026

(2Q2026)

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Summary of WOAHA reporting to July 2026

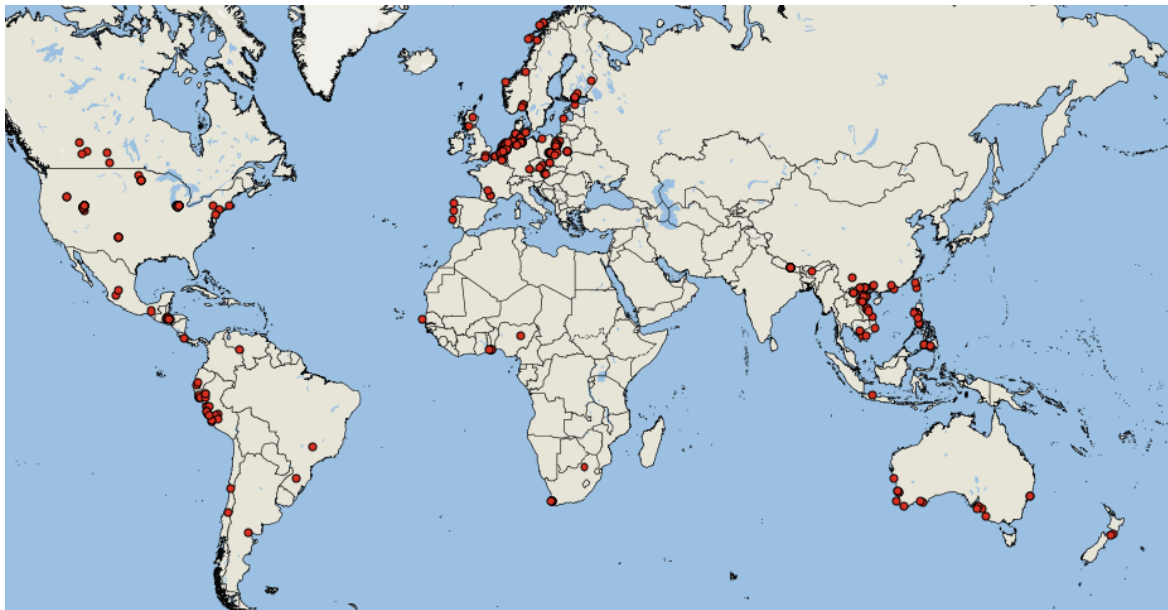


Figure 1: Map indicating global HPAI outbreaks

Figure 1 shows worldwide-confirmed HPAI outbreaks between April and July 2026. This period covers mostly the northern summer and the southern winter period. This means that the number of outbreaks in the northern hemisphere is lower than during the winter months – however, even in the spring and summer months outbreaks keep occurring. Avian influenza cases in cattle are still occurring in the USA – fortunately this has not yet spread beyond the Americas, but one has to assume that it will spread in due course.

A number of cases have been reported from the southern hemisphere – in South America, the virus has been reported in wild and domestic birds. The scale of outbreaks is not always clear, however. Of particular interest have been the recent reports of HPAI in wild birds in both Australia and New Zealand. It appears that the virus has crossed the Indian Ocean by infecting subantarctic bird populations and has now started moving into other wild bird species in Australasia. This means that the H5Nx virus family has extended its reach across the entire planet.

1.2. Africa situation

Outbreaks have been reported from West Africa by WOAHA in May and June 2026.

Togo: According to the WOAHA, five poultry flocks totalling just over 15 000 birds were found to be infected in the first 10 days of July.

Nigeria: In June an outbreak was confirmed on a poultry farm in the northern state of Bauchi, affecting 1 400 poultry. These cases are apparently associated with a new strain of H5N1 HPAI – there is no information about the possible origin of the new strain.

Senegal has also reported detection of H5 HPAI viruses in a population of mixed bird species, including ducks and chickens, near Dakar.

Outbreaks in West Africa are always a source of concern for South Africa as strains identified in that region are typically also identified in South Africa over time.

1.3. South Africa

On 20 May 2026 a case of HPAI was diagnosed by PCR and genomic sequencing in a commercial layer unit that housed approximately 18 000 hens, near Brits in North West. The virus was identified as H5N1 and is closely related to other H5N1 viruses isolated during the outbreaks in 2025. The laying facility is located close the Crocodile River and even closer to a substantial tributary of this river. The facility is also surrounded by a number of dams which are home to populations of various wild ducks. The unit has poor bird-proofing and there was evidence of wild birds sleeping inside the sheds. It seems likely that wild birds were the source of the infection. Other links to industry were explored and were considered less likely sources than the wild birds. The flock was destroyed and no spread of the disease was reported.

The disease spread quite slowly through the affected flock and mortality rates remained relatively low until the flock was destroyed.

This remains the only confirmed and reported case of HPAI in commercial poultry to date in 2026 in South Africa.

1.4. HPAI vaccination

HPAI vaccination has been carried out in place at a small number of broiler breeder farm complexes using the existing HPAI vaccination protocol.

At the request of the Deputy Director-General of Agriculture, the HPAI working group is drafting an avian influenza vaccination scheme for consideration by the Minister of Agriculture which would operate under Section 10 of the Animal Diseases Act. This process has proven tough to execute but progress has been good and the team hopes to have a submission completed for discussion with the Department by the end of August 2026. There remains uncertainty about how this scheme would actually be used or implemented.

1.5. Low pathogenicity avian influenza – H9N2 strain

No new cases of H9N2 have been reported in Southern Africa since the report in Mozambique in August 2025. This virus had Middle Eastern origins. H9N2 viruses were reported in Senegal since December 2025. H9N2 viruses are showing an enhanced ability to infect human cells and have been identified as having 'pandemic potential'. They pose a potential risk for South African poultry.

2. RESULTS OF AI SURVEILLANCE MONITORING

2.1. Reported HPAI outbreaks

Two outbreaks of H5N1 were reported towards the end of June 2025 in broiler breeder flocks, in the provinces of Mpumalanga and North West.

In the third quarter, a further 7 outbreaks occurred in domestic birds in Eastern Cape (1), Mpumalanga (2) and Western Cape (4), bringing the total number of outbreaks to 9.

More recent outbreaks were reported in Western Cape in December 2025 (2) and North West in May 2026 (1). In all 3 cases the farm type was given as commercial other.

To date, 4 broiler breeder, 3 commercial layer and 4 commercial other units have been affected, as well as 1 duck farm. The estimated number of culls is indicated in Table 1. (Note: Some changes have been made since the previous report.)

Table 1: Birds culled per province				
Province	Broiler breeders	Commercial layers	Commercial other	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	15 400	160 000	117	175 517
National	297 283	440 000		737 400

According to the Department of Agriculture, a total of 12 outbreaks were reported in poultry (source: *Avian Influenza: H5 and H7 outbreak update report*, 30 June 2026). Eleven of the outbreaks were resolved by the date of publication, with the one unresolved outbreak being in North West.

A total of 44 outbreaks of H5 in wild birds and 9 in backyard operations (Table 2) were confirmed. One case was detected in a mammal, a Cape fur seal in Western Cape.

Table 2: Categorical breakdown of HPAI H5 outbreaks per province					
Province	Commercial poultry	Backyard	Wild birds	Mammals	Total
E. Cape	1		4		5
Free State					0
Gauteng			1		1
KZN					0
Limpopo			1		1
Mpumal.	3	1			4
N. West	2				2
N. Cape					0
W. Cape	6	8	38	1	52
Total cases	12	9	44	1	65

Source: DoA, 30 June 2026. *Avian Influenza: H5 and H7 outbreak update report*

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 period from 21 June 2025 to 11 May 2026.

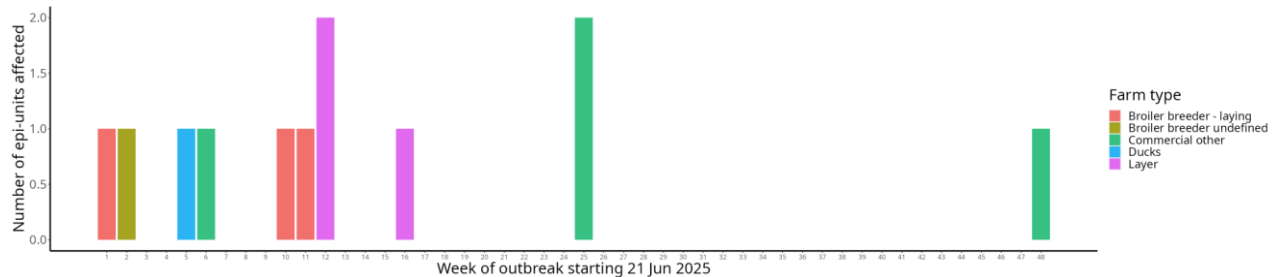


Figure 2: H5N1 epidemic curve classified according to farm type (21 Jun 2025 – 11 May 2026)

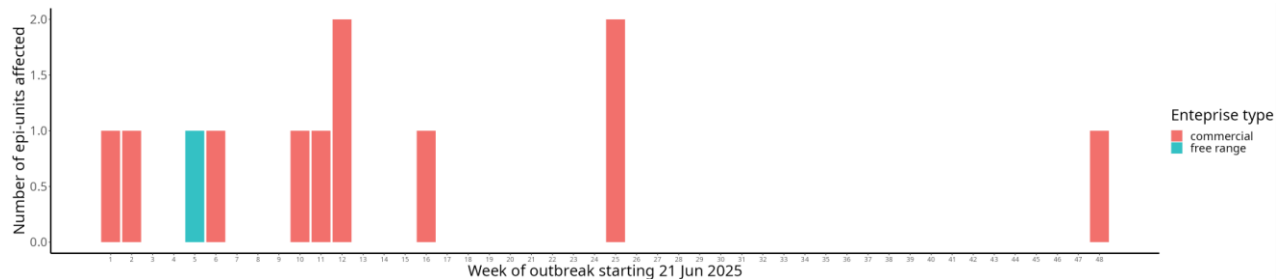


Figure 3: H5N1 epidemic curve classified according to enterprise type (21 Jun 2025 – 11 May 2026)

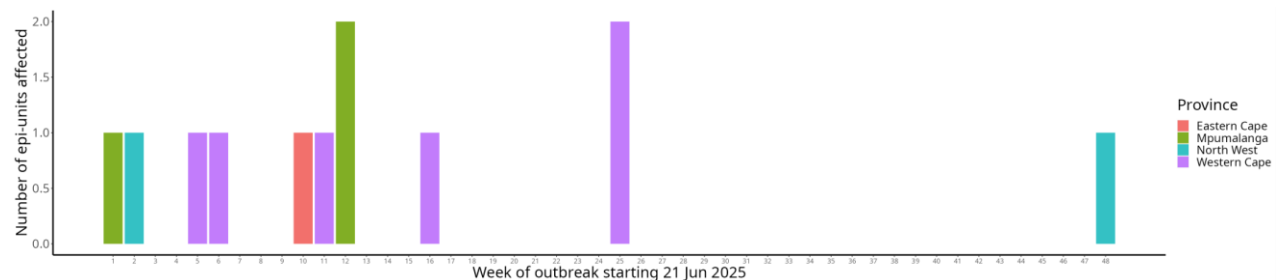


Figure 4: H5N1 epidemic curve classified according to province (21 Jun 2025 – 11 May 2026)

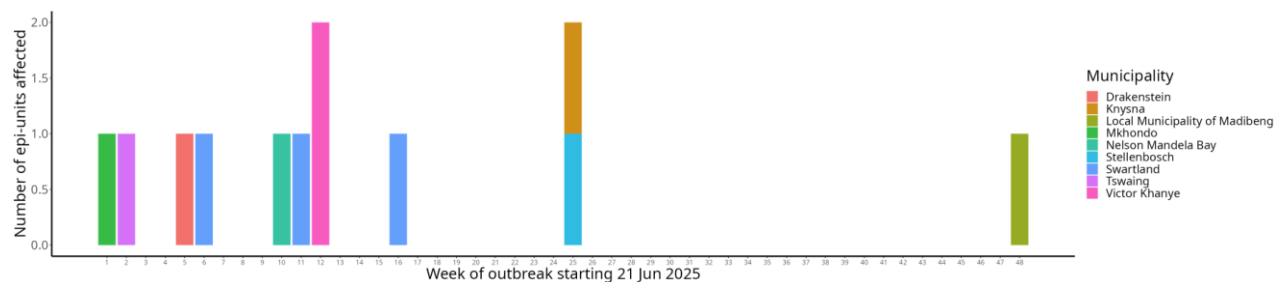


Figure 5: H5N1 epidemic curve classified according to municipality (21 Jun 2025 – 11 May 2026)

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



Figure 6: H5N1 outbreak density (21 Jun 2025 – 11 May 2026)



Figure 7: H5N1 outbreak spread (21 Jun 2025 – 11 May 2026)

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 36 312 in 1Q2026 to 37 144. These figures change from time to time due to ongoing submissions of data. The number of broiler industry farms submitting samples

remained constant at 284, while the number of egg industry farms submitting samples increased from 12 to 26. Of the samples tested during 2Q2026, 18 (0.05%) were initially found to be positive. However, on retesting all samples came back negative for HPAI.

Table 3: AI test results					
PROVINCE	FARM TYPE		SAMPLES		
	Broiler industry	Egg industry	Tested	Positive (ELISA)	Negative
Eastern Cape	32	0	3 292	0	3 292
Free State	40	0	5 889	0	5 889
Gauteng	17	3	3 064	0	3 064
KwaZulu-Natal	55	1	7 052	17	7 035
Limpopo	23	11	3 912	0	3 912
Mpumalanga	10	1	1 391	0	1 391
North West	76	9	10 041	1	10 039
Northern Cape	1	0	270	0	270
Western Cape	30	1	2 233	0	2 234
National	284	26	37 144	18	37 126

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.

Table 4: Number of farms that participated	
Broiler industry	
GGP and grandparent farms	16
Parent rearing farms	37
Broiler breeder farms	69
Broiler rearing farms	162
TOTAL	284
Egg industry	
Grandparent farms	2
Parent rearing farms	0
Layer breeder farms	11
Pullet rearing farms	8
Layers (table egg production)	5
TOTAL	26
BROILER AND EGG INDUSTRIES	310

Table 5 indicates the total number of farms that had previously participated but 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	10	12
Free State	14	35
Gauteng	52	54
KwaZulu-Natal	43	38
Limpopo	8	13
Mpumalanga	91	26
North West	68	36
Northern Cape	1	5
Western Cape	75	37
National	362	256

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.

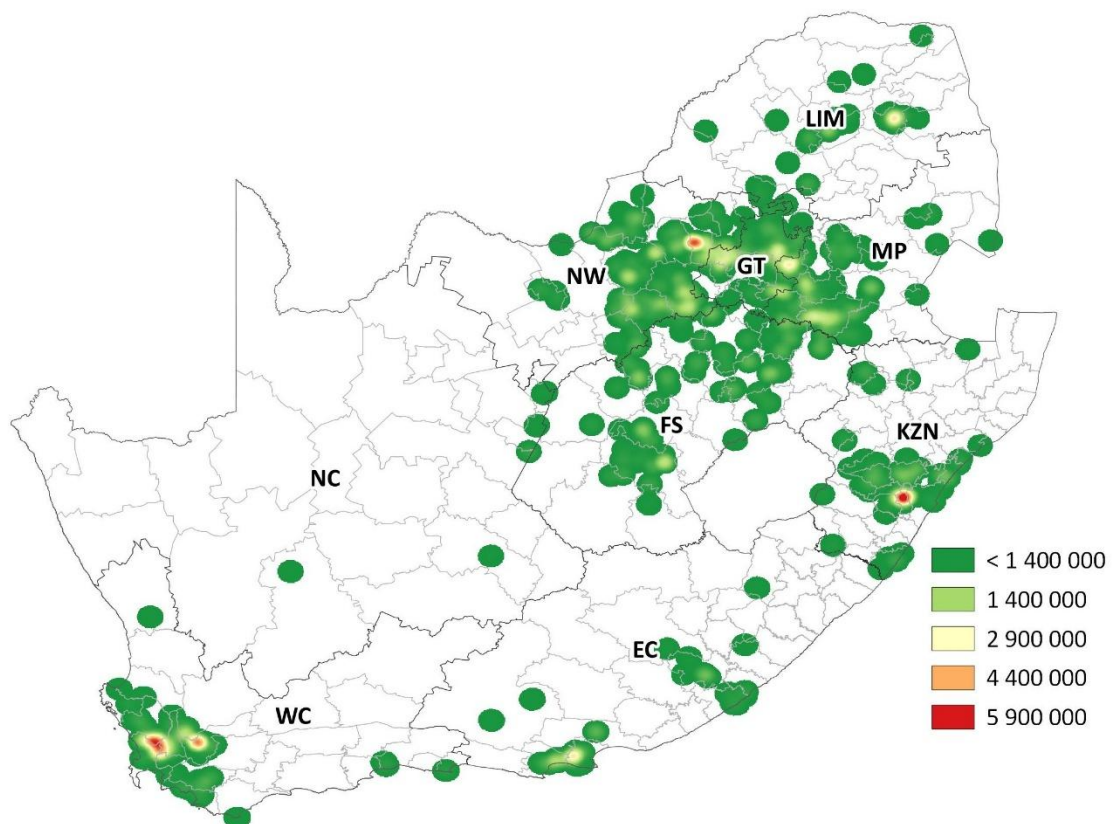


Figure 8: Heat map illustrating the density of chickens

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

The recent outbreak of H5N1 on a farm in North West is a chilling reminder of the importance of tight biosecurity and controlled bird movement.

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.

Data collated by Silverpath Consulting

Report compiled by Leading Edge Poultry Software

Technical input provided by Dr Shahn Bisschop and Dr John Grewar

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