SOUTH AFRICAN POULTRY ASSOCIATION
Founded 1904

REPORT ON AVIAN INFLUENZA (AI)

SURVEILLANCE MONITORING FOR THE SURVEILLANCE PERIOD

July to September 2026

(3Q2026)

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Summary of WOAH reporting to end September 2026

The number of outbreaks in the northern hemisphere is starting to climb as the weather there cools and as bird migration spreads the virus. In Europe there are multiple reports in wild birds, as well as isolated reports in domestic and commercial poultry. In the USA, multiple wild bird isolates are recorded in the national APHIS (USDA) database each day, from a diverse range of wild birds. Outbreaks also affect the commercial poultry sector – with principally commercial laying hens affected.

Figure 1 shows worldwide-confirmed HPAI outbreaks between July and September 2026. This period covers mostly the northern autumn and the southern spring period.

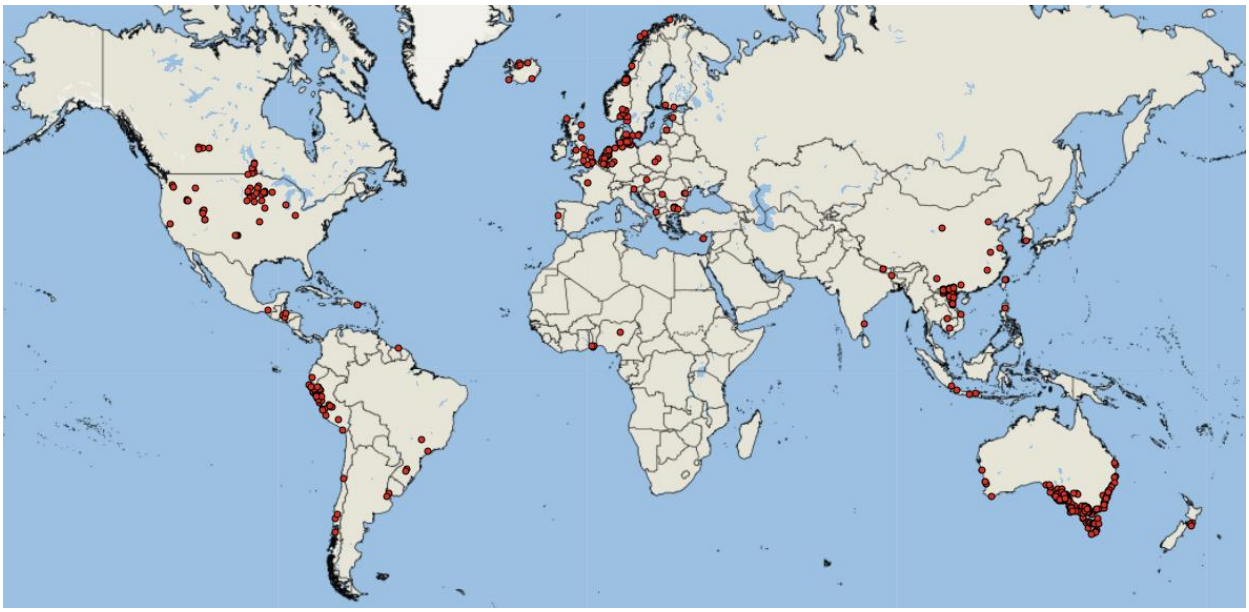


Figure 1: Map indicating global HPAI outbreaks

Figure 2 shows annual total losses of commercial poultry by year. Flocks have clearly not been as severely affected this year as in 2024 and 2025 (USDA Data).

Figure 3 gives a breakdown of the % of bird losses caused by HPAI by farm sector – clearly showing the severe impact on the commercial laying industry.

Cases have also been reported from the southern hemisphere. In South America, few cases have been reported in commercial poultry, however backyard and small-scale flocks are affected from time to time. The virus is reported from wetlands in Argentina and Uruguay associated with bird die-offs and from pelagic seabirds along the coast of Chile and Peru.

Of particular interest have been the reports of HPAI in wild birds in both Australia and New Zealand. There have been approximately 700 wildlife infection incidents of H5 Influenza in Australia since the first cases a few months ago. Predatory birds such as swamp harriers and skuas have been severely affected, but indigenous black swans and waterfowl have also been affected with high mortality rates. The virus was isolated from a long-nosed fur-seal. In New Zealand only 3 cases have been reported, 2 from seabirds and one from a swamp harrier. No cases have been reported in commercial poultry in either country to date.

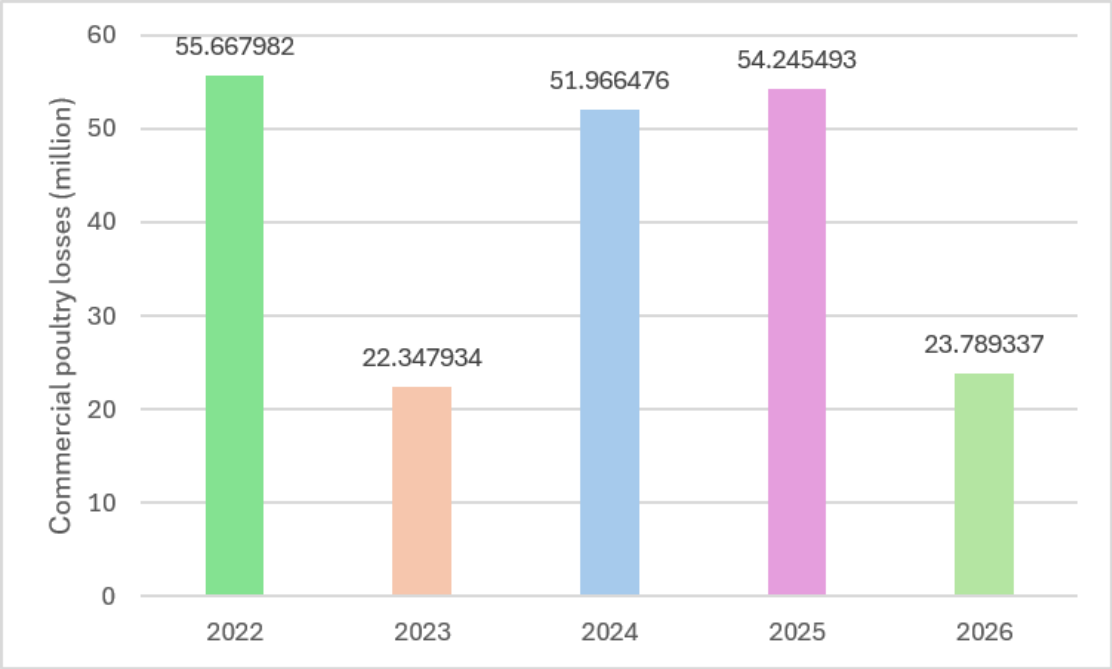


Figure 2: Annual HPAI losses from all commercial birds to 1 October 2026

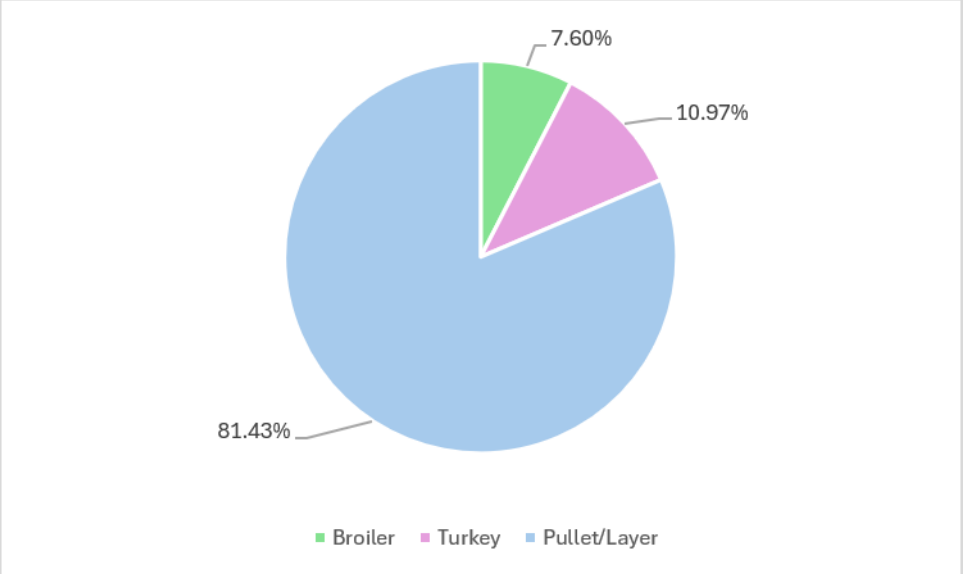


Figure 3: Percentage of HPAI losses by poultry type from 2022 to 1 October 2026

1.2. Africa situation

Only two outbreaks were reported to WOAH from West Africa, both appear to be in small scale chicken flocks. The one in coastal Ghana affected about 600 birds and the other in Plateau State in Nigeria was reported in a flock of 1 600 birds.

1.3. South Africa

No new cases were reported in South Africa during the period under review and all outstanding outbreaks closed barring one, soon to be resolved.

1.4. HPAI vaccination

HPAI vaccination was done at a small number of broiler breeder farm complexes using the existing HPAI vaccination protocol. This programme has not been expanded, even though a few producers have permission to vaccinate.

At the request of the Deputy Director-General of Agriculture, the HPAI working group submitted an avian influenza vaccination scheme for consideration by the Minister of Agriculture which would operate under Section 10 of the Animal Diseases Act. The proposal was submitted to the DDG of Agriculture during the first week of September. No formal feedback has been received to date. There remains uncertainty about how this scheme would 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. Strains of H9N2 have been identified in parts of East Africa during the quarter under review. 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

No new outbreaks have been reported. All outbreaks reported toward the end of June will be resolved when the last farm in North West completes disinfection (source: *Avian Influenza: H5 and H7 outbreak update report*, 30 Sept 2026). As a result of these outbreaks 737 400 birds were culled nationally.

2.2. AI surveillance programme

Table 1 summarises the AI test results of farms that submitted data during the reporting period. The total number of samples tested increased from 37 126 in 2Q2026 to 37 904 in 3Q2026. These figures change from time to time due to ongoing submissions of data. The number of broiler industry farms submitting samples increased from 284 to 297, while the number of egg industry farms submitting samples decreased by 1 to 25. Of the samples tested during 3Q2026, 39 (0.10%) were initially found to be positive. However, 33 of these samples tested negative for HPAI on further testing. The remaining 6 require retesting.

Table 1: AI test results					
PROVINCE	**FARM TYPE**		**SAMPLES**		
	Broiler industry	Egg industry	Tested	Positive (ELISA)	Negative
Eastern Cape	33	0	3 445	0	3 445
Free State	43	1	6 119	0	6 119
Gauteng	17	4	3 170	0	3 170
KwaZulu-Natal	56	1	6 361	34	6 327
Limpopo	26	4	3 589	2	3 587
Mpumalanga	10	3	1 218	0	1 218
North West	83	12	11 670	3	11 667
Northern Cape	1	0	120	0	120
Western Cape	28	0	2 251	0	2 251
National	**297**	**25**	**37 943**	**39**	**37 904**

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

Table 2: Number of farms that participated	
Broiler industry	
GGP and grandparent farms	15
Parent rearing farms	41
Broiler breeder farms	74
Broiler rearing farms	167
TOTAL	297
Egg industry	
Grandparent farms	3
Parent rearing farms	0
Layer breeder farms	16
Pullet rearing farms	6
Layers (table egg production)	0
TOTAL	25
BROILER AND EGG INDUSTRIES	**322**

Table 3 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 3: Number of farms that did not submit AI test results		
PROVINCE	**FARM TYPE**	
	Broiler industry	**Egg industry**
Eastern Cape	17	12
Free State	14	35
Gauteng	61	55
KwaZulu-Natal	52	38
Limpopo	13	20
Mpumalanga	91	24
North West	69	35
Northern Cape	1	5
Western Cape	88	38
National	**406**	**262**

Figure 4 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.

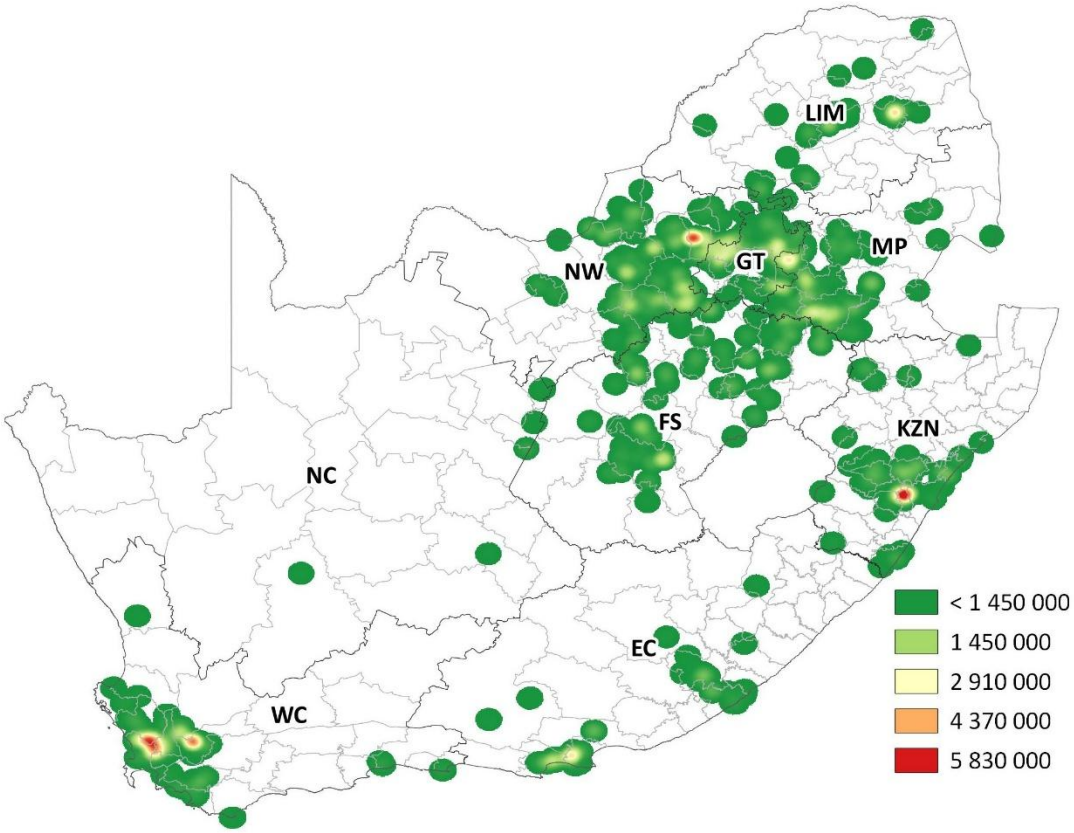


Figure 4: Heat map illustrating the density of chickens

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

Thankfully there have been no outbreaks of H5N1 reported this quarter, but tight biosecurity and controlled movement of birds are still imperative to reduce the risk.

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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