

CULL TRADERS REPORT

FOR THE PERIOD 1 JULY TO 30 SEPTEMBER 2026

(3Q2026)

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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 implement 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). 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.

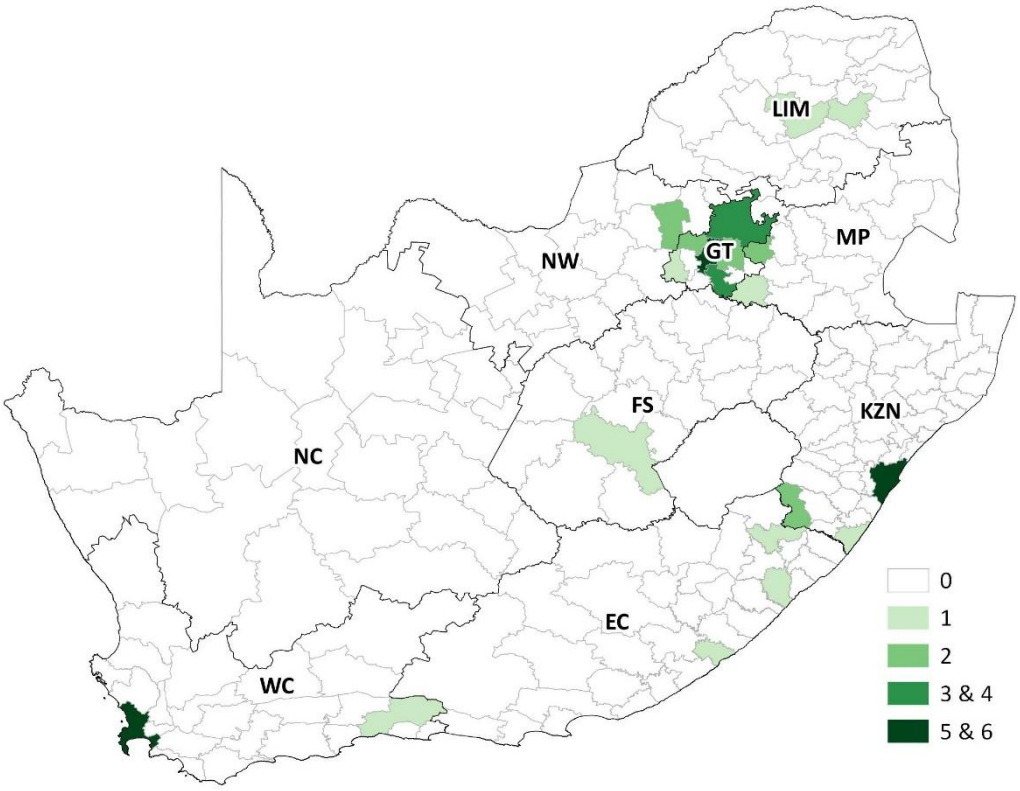
Table 1 provides a breakdown of the registered traders and producers in each province for the previous and current reporting periods. The total number of registrations increased by 13 (+0.5%) during the quarter. Of the 1688 traders on the database, only 141 (8.4%) submitted data in 3Q2026. Similarly, of the 937 producers on the database 48 (5.1%) were involved in transactions reported during 3Q2026.

Table 1: Registered live bird traders and poultry producers

Traders	2Q2026	32Q2026	Change	% change
Eastern Cape	82	82	0	0.0
Free State	51	51	0	0.0
Gauteng	401	403	2	0.5
KwaZulu-Natal	58	58	0	0.0
Limpopo	705	706	1	0.1
Mpumalanga	85	85	0	0.0
North West	188	189	1	0.5
Northern Cape	5	5	0	0.0
Western Cape	109	109	0	0.0
Total traders	**1 684**	**1 688**	**4**	**0.2**
Producers				
Eastern Cape	54	59	5	9.3
Free State	89	88	-1	-1.1
Gauteng	126	126	0	0.0
KwaZulu-Natal	137	137	0	0.0
Limpopo	55	60	5	9.1
Mpumalanga	128	127	-1	-0.8
North West	189	190	1	0.5
Northern Cape	7	7	0	0.0
Western Cape	143	143	0	0.0
Total producers	**928**	**937**	**9**	**1.0**
Total registration	**2 612**	**2 625**	**13**	**0.5**

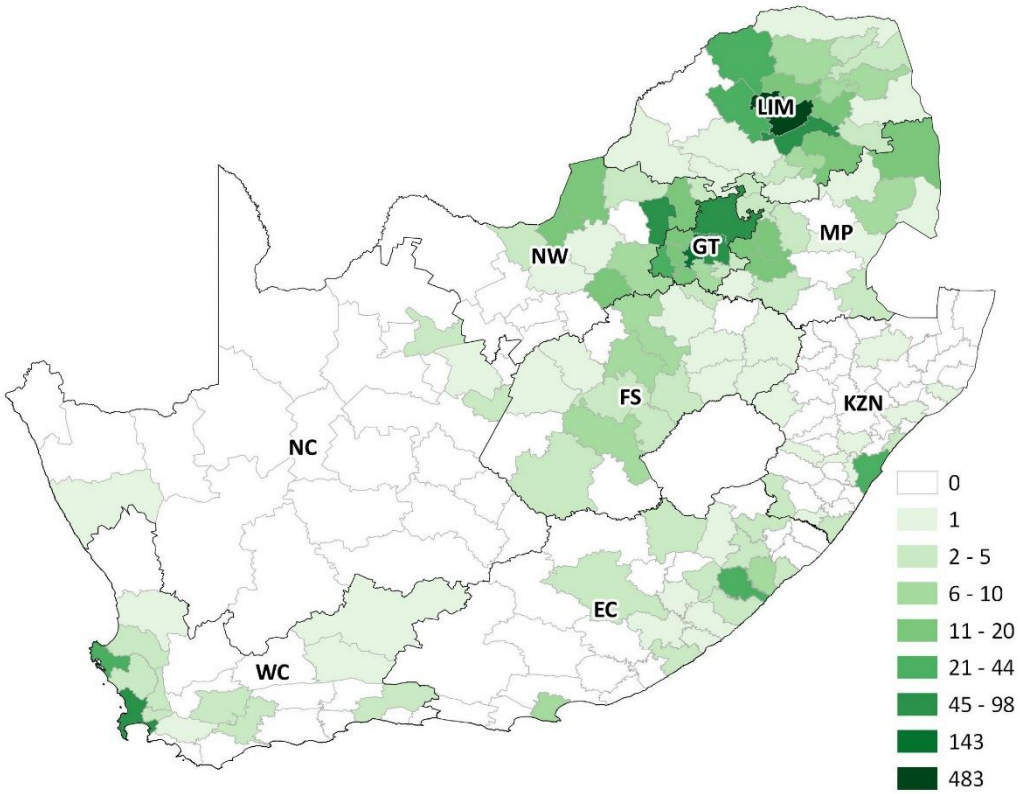
The distribution of registered cull depots per local municipality is shown in Figure 1. The depots are concentrated in eThekwini (6), City of Cape Town (5), City of Johannesburg (5), City of Tshwane (4) and Midvaal (3). In total 43 cull depots were registered on the database in 3Q2026. Twenty nine of the 43 registered cull depots (67.4%) 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 (483), City of Johannesburg (143), Rustenburg (98), Ekurhuleni (93) and City of Tshwane (81).



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 3Q2026. This information is obtained from the removal permits issued by the veterinarians and animal health technicians. This quarter there were no removal permits submitted for layers. 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)	
May 26	0	0.0	71 669	64.6	71 669
Jun 26	0	0.0	74 141	63.4	74 141
Jul 26	0	0.0	7 000	62.0	7 000
TOTAL	**0**	**0.0**	**152 810**	**63.9**	**152 810**

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.

Table 3: Reconciliation of trader statistics

Province	Chickens at start	Chickens bought	Chickens sold	Chickens remaining	Number of deaths
Eastern Cape	0	127 053	126 217	0	836
Free State	0	500	500	0	0
Gauteng	0	414 131	408 095	3 500	2 536
KwaZulu-Natal	27 925	414 297	441 827	0	395
Limpopo	0	46 930	46 781	6	143
Mpumalanga	0	17 477	17 307	0	170
North West	0	45 125	44 972	0	153
Northern Cape	0	0	0	0	0
Western Cape	0	48 674	44 536	3 846	292
Total	**27 925**	**1 114 187**	**1 130 235**	**7 352**	**4 525**

Table 4: Movement of culls between boundaries

Sales channel	Within province (%)	Outside province (%)	Total (%)	Within municipality (%)	Outside municipality (%)	Total (%)
Farms to traders	30.9	69.1	100.0	0.5	99.5	100.0
Traders to consumers	89.3	10.7	100.0	70.7	29.3	100.0
Farms to depots	25.8	74.2	100.0	6.3	93.7	100.0
Depots to consumers	50.6	49.4	100.0	49.7	50.3	100.0

Table 5: Suspected causes of death

Cause	Number of birds	%
Avian influenza	0	0.0
Distance travelled	646	14.3
Hot weather	223	4.9
No sign of illness	612	13.5
Prolapse	44	1.0
Slaughtered	94	2.1
Stress	0	0.0
Trampling	0	0.0
Undiagnosed disease	244	5.4
Other	2 662	58.8
Total	**4 525**	**100.0**

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.

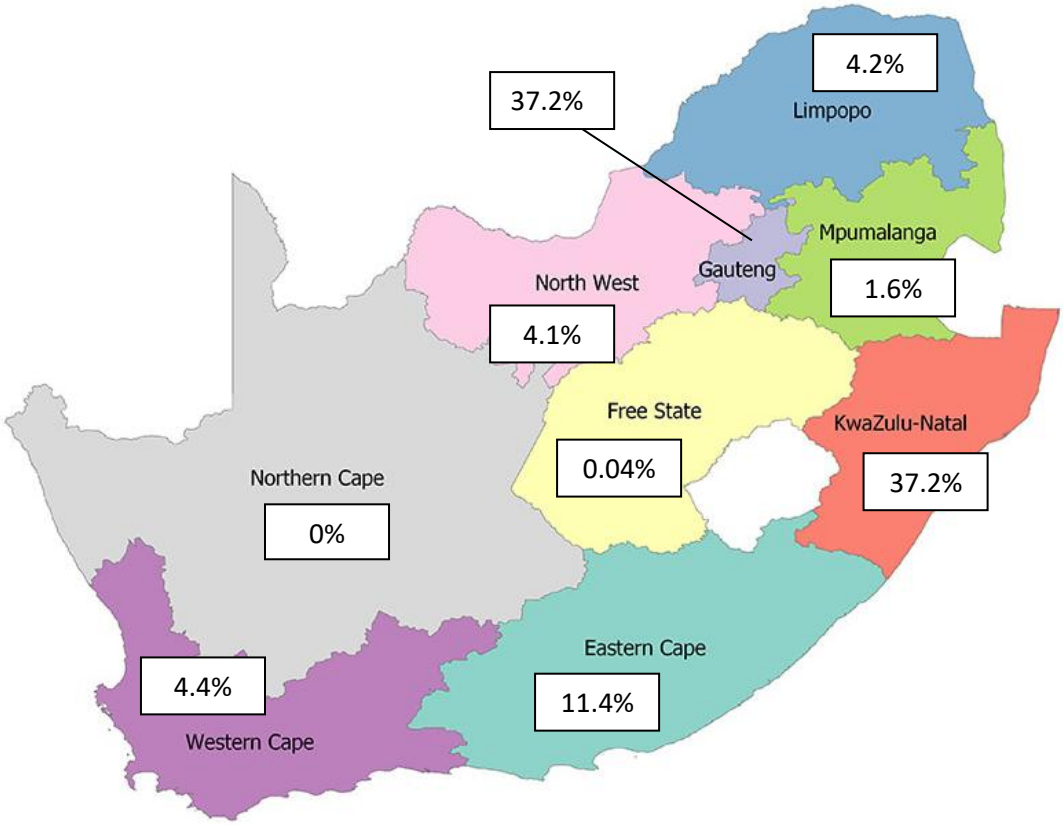


Figure 3: Provincial purchases of cull birds from farms

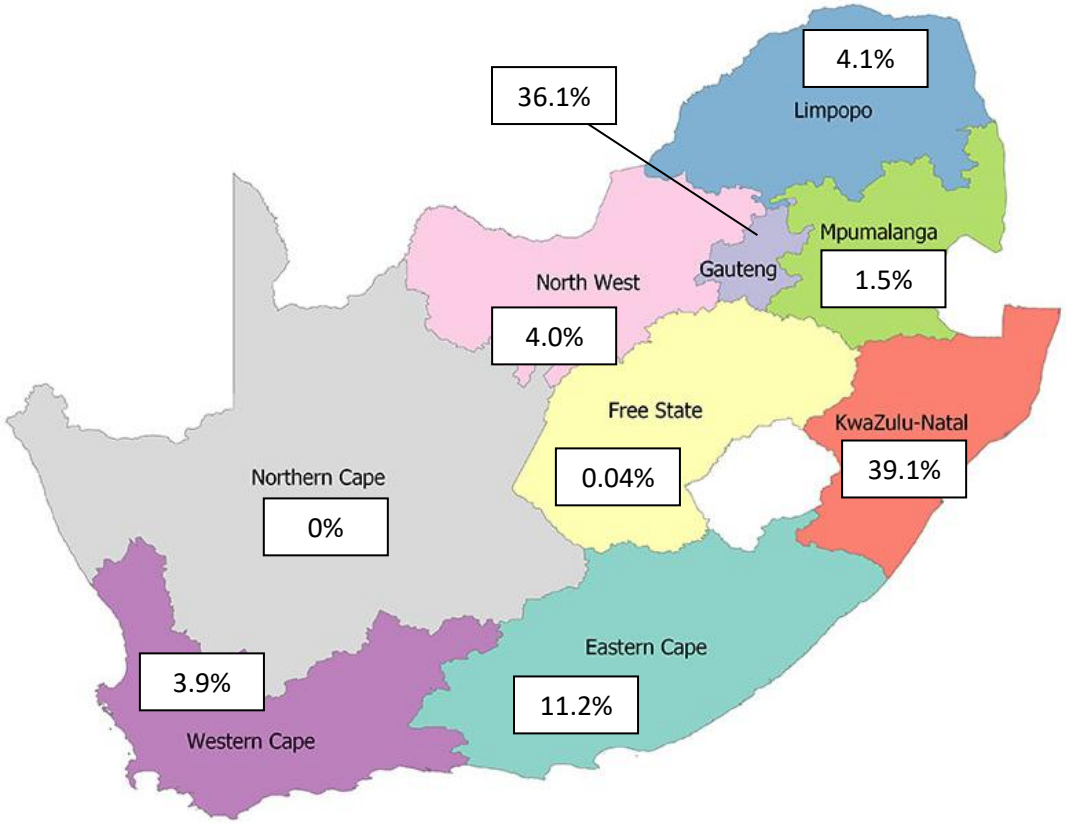


Figure 4: Provincial sales of cull birds by traders

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) 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.

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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