

**Voluntary Report** – Voluntary - Public Distribution

**Date:** December 20, 2023

**Report Number:** SF2023-0046

**Report Name:** Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza in South Africa- Update

**Country:** South Africa - Republic of

**Post:** Pretoria

**Report Category:** Poultry and Products

**Prepared By:** Makoma Makgopa, Amy Caldwell

**Approved By:** Ali Abdi

**Report Highlights:**

The Animal Health Directorate in the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development (DALRRD) released a progress report on the Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) outbreak that was first detected in the Western Cape Province in April 2023. A total of 7.5 million broilers and layer chickens were reportedly culled between April and September 2023. The outbreak appears to be slowing with just 750,000 slaughtered in October and November. A total of twenty-two H5 outbreaks and fifteen H7 outbreaks were reported to the World Organization for Animal Health (WOAH) as of November 2023. The geographic spread has similarly abated, with DALRRD reporting that eleven H5 and fifteen H7 outbreaks have been resolved. To supplement demand and rebuild the lost flock, import permits have been issued for 9 million fertilized eggs, 945,000 day-old chicks, 62 metric tons of egg products and 30,986 metric tons of poultry meat.

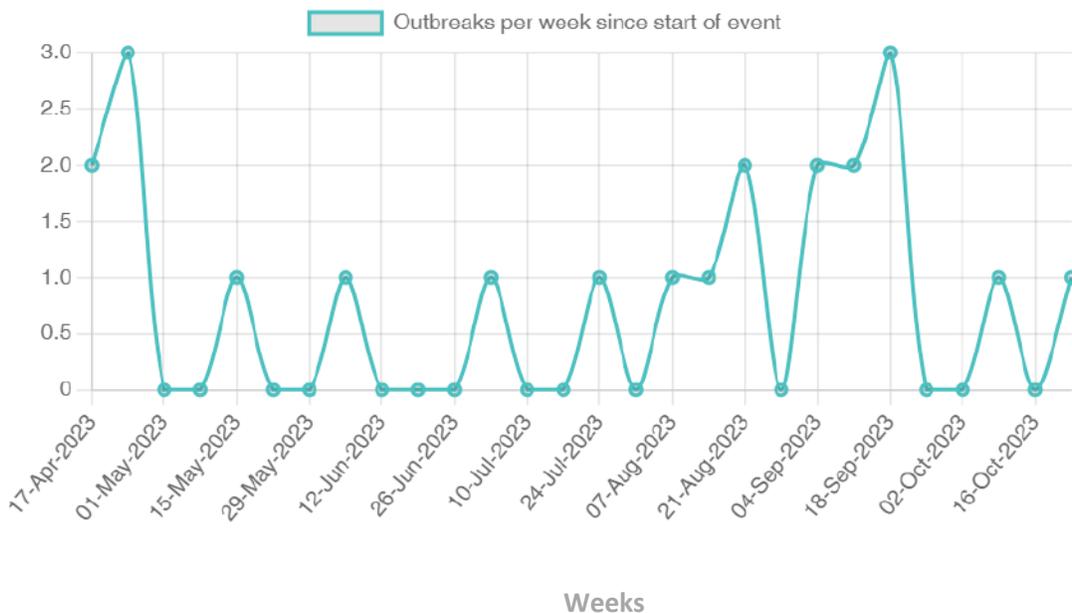
## Disease Updates

An estimated 8.25 million broiler and layer chickens have been called during the outbreak. This led to a 30 percent loss in local layer capacity and a shortage of eggs on supermarket shelves. The outbreak appears to be slowing with just 750,000 chickens slaughtered in October and November. The outbreak reached a peak in September 2023. See: [South Africa intensifying battle highly pathogenic avian influenza leads to egg shortage and possible vaccination program.](#)

The current HPAI outbreaks were caused by two H5 and H7 HPAI strains. The department reports that the HPAI H5 strain was a new strain that was introduced in October 2022 in the Free State Province while the H7 strain was the first ever HPAI H7 to be detected in chickens in South Africa.

**Figure 1**

### Distribution of the HPAI outbreak



Source: DALRRD

A total of twenty-two H5 outbreak locations and fifteen H7 outbreaks were reported by DALRRD to the World Organization for Animal Health (WOAH). In November 2023, the department reported that eleven H5 and fifteen H7 locations outbreaks were cleared of HPAI.

The Department has further reported that good progress is being made with the development of a local H7 AI vaccine. However, it will still take some time to gather all the required information to support registration.

## **Commercial and Trade Impacts**

Meanwhile, the Minister of DALRRD has stated that farms constituting 70 percent of local capacity have not been infected and continue to produce chickens and eggs. To supplement demand and rebuild the lost flock, the department has allocated permits for imports of 9 million fertilized eggs, 945,000-day-old chicks, 62 metric tons of egg products and 30,986 metric tons of poultry meat. The South African Poultry Association (SAPA) recently reported that they would require 100 million fertilized eggs to rebuild capacity after 30 percent of layers were lost. The Association's general manager reported that there is a shortage of table eggs in the country, and it will be well into 2024 before the full production capacity enabled by 27-million-layer hens' is restored.

Although the supply of eggs has slightly recovered on the supermarket shelves, the price of eggs continues to be high at a 66 percent increase. Two major players in the poultry industry have reported losses in the past financial year, as a result of the HPAI outbreak, load shedding and other infrastructure challenges. Quantum eggs reported that load shedding and other infrastructure challenges has led to their first annual loss since 2014.

The International Trade Administration Commission is reportedly still considering a temporary tariff rebate on imported poultry products. However, there has been little news on the issue after the request was made by the Minister of Trade, Industry and Competition in October. The proposal was highly criticized by the local poultry industry.

**Attachments:**

No Attachments.