

Voluntary Report – Voluntary - Public Distribution

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Report Name: Update on the Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza Outbreak in South Africa

Country: South Africa - Republic of

Post: Pretoria

Report Category: Pest/Disease Occurrences, Poultry and Products, Sanitary/Phytosanitary/Food Safety

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Report Highlights:

The ongoing outbreak of highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) H5N1 in South Africa, which began in April 2021, has led to the culling of nearly 3 million birds, primarily layers. While the greatest impact to date has been in the Western Cape, the virus is now continuing to spread primarily in Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal. The Gauteng province produces 24 percent of South Africa's eggs while KwaZulu Natal produces 10 percent. As a result of the outbreak, many of South Africa's regional trading partners have imposed import restrictions on South Africa's egg and poultry products.

Background

The outbreak of highly pathogenic avian influenza H5N1 in South Africa is not yet over, but a picture is emerging of its impact on the poultry industry. In its surveillance monitoring report for August 2021, the South African Poultry Association stressed that the avian virus was still spreading, particularly in Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal. Producers were advised to remain on high alert and continue to comply with HPAI protocols.

The first HPAI outbreak was detected in April 2021 in the Gauteng, North -West and Western Cape Provinces. See: [Avian Influenza Outbreak in Gauteng North West and Western Cape Provinces of South Africa Pretoria South Africa - Republic of 05-19-2021](#)

Between April and mid-August 2021, 87 outbreaks were reported, with the commercial egg industry hardest hit. The number of birds culled by mid-August had exceeded 2.9 million, according to the survey. An estimated 0.8% of broiler industry birds (772,882) and 5.9% of egg industry birds (2,136,974) have been culled since April 2021. The egg industry in the Western Cape province has suffered the greatest losses, with an estimated 22.5% of their layers affected by the outbreak.

Although much of the industry has compared the current outbreak with the HPAI H5N8 outbreak in 2017, there are notable differences. The current outbreak has been better controlled, reporting significantly fewer outbreaks in the first 29 weeks. While the 2017 outbreak primarily impacted ostriches, chickens have been the primary bird impacted by the current virus.

Table 1: 2017 and 2021 HPAI Outbreak Comparison of Cases

	Total Cases in first 29 weeks	Percent chickens	Percent wild birds	Percent ostrich
2017 Outbreak	120	23.3	20	56.7
2021 Outbreak	87	42.5	51,8	5.7

Source: South African Poultry Association

Impact on South Africa's Egg Market

Mozambique, Eswatini and Botswana imposed restrictions due to the outbreak which has led to a significant reduction in overall export volumes. As a result of the restrictions, Mozambican authorities returned truckloads of eggs from South Africa at their shared Komatipoort border. In a normal year, Mozambique represents about 75% of South Africa's egg export market.

South Africa typically exports less than 5 percent of overall egg production. With the increased domestic supply due to a loss of export markets somewhat offsetting the loss of production due to culling, domestic egg prices have been holding steady, resisting the price inflation seen in many other proteins. While the 2017 outbreak caused a sharp increase in egg prices due to a nearly 20 percent reduction in the national layer flock, production rebounded significantly in the following years. Despite the significant culling associated with the current outbreak to date, a similar price shock seems unlikely given the current course of the disease.

Table 2: South Africa' Exports of Egg and Egg Products to the World.

Partner Country	2019	2020	April-September 2020	April-September 2021	%Change
World	16,004	12,881	5,933	3,087	-47.97
Mozambique	13,786	10,609	4,728	2,283	-51.71
Eswatini	1,726	1,639	897	553	-38.35
Botswana	317	394	198	89	-55.05
Lesotho	54	134	58	107	84.48
Nigeria	44	58	38	19	-50.00
Others	77	47	14	36	157.14

Source: South African Revenue Services

Impact on South Africa's Poultry Market

Unencumbered by HPAI, South Africa has traditionally exported approximately 3% of poultry production. Poultry and poultry products exports decreased by -21.20 percent in April to September 2021 as compared to April to September 2020. The impact to poultry trade is less significant than the impact to egg exports because Department of Agriculture Land Reform and Rural Development negotiated terms of trade with the neighboring trading partners like Namibia and Botswana so that only

compartments that were affected by the outbreak are restricted from exporting. However, not all regional trading partners have accepted compartmentalization. Mozambique recorded the highest decrease with a -83.20 percent.

Table 3: South Africa’ Exports of Poultry and Poultry Products to the World

Partner Country	2019	2020	April-September 2020	April-September 2021	%Change 2021/20
World	54,529	55,224	25,328	19,959	-21.20
Lesotho	23,680	23,181	10,758	10,251	-4.71
Mozambique	14,733	14,301	6,358	1,068	-83.20
Namibia	5,745	8,015	3,933	4,528	15.13
Eswatini	2,600	3,152	1,452	1,357	-6.54
Botswana	2,840	2,305	845	1,199	41.89
Others	4,931	4,270	1,982	1,556	-21.49

Source: South African Revenue Services

Attachments:

No Attachments.