

Foot and Mouth Disease outbreak report

31 March 2025



agriculture, land reform
& rural development

Department:
Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Report compiled by:
Directorate: Animal Health

1. Introduction and summary

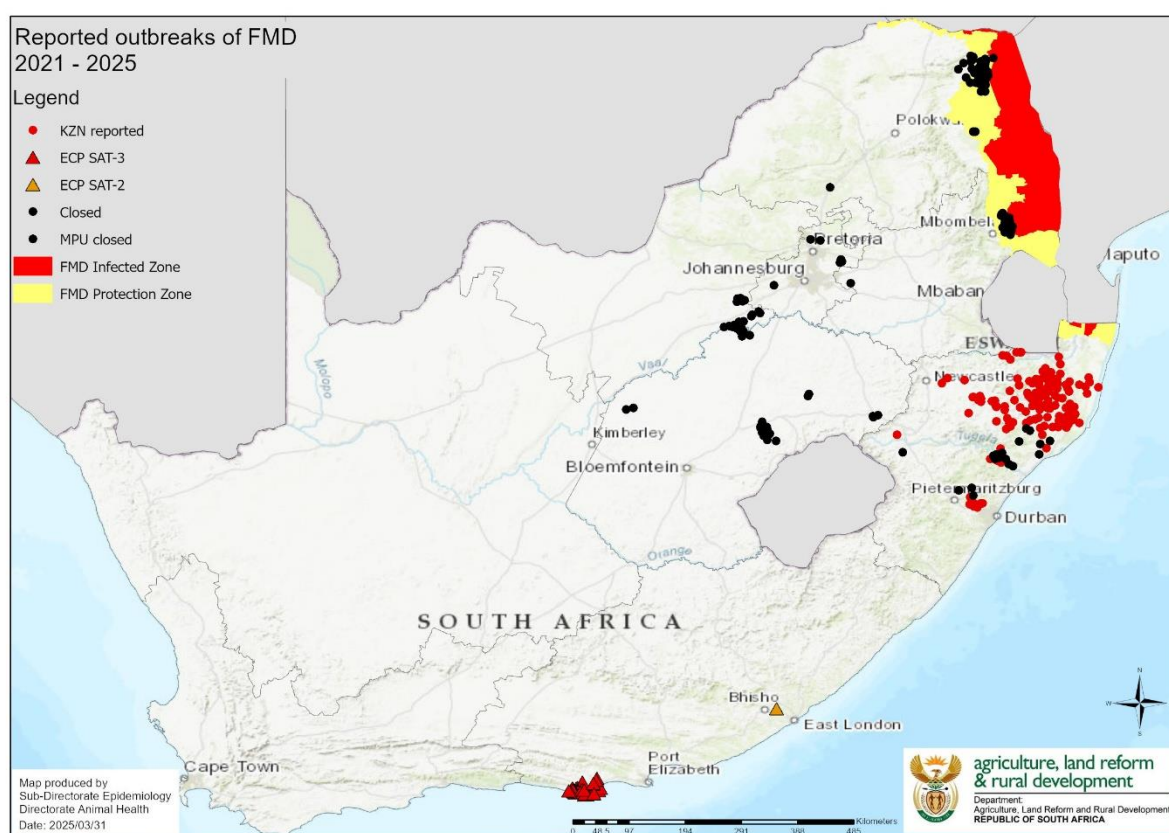
Prior to January 2019, South Africa maintained a Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD)-free zone without vaccination. However, since then, the country has reported eleven outbreak events that have affected this FMD-free zone. Currently, four outbreak events remain unresolved in the KwaZulu-Natal and Eastern Cape provinces, while seven have been successfully managed and closed with the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH).

Details of the resolved outbreaks, which have been closed with the WOAH, were included in previous technical update reports and can be provided upon request.

The details of the following outbreak events are included in this report.

- SAT2 FMD outbreak event in KwaZulu Natal Province
- SAT1 FMD outbreak event in KwaZulu Natal Province
- SAT3 FMD outbreak event in the Eastern Cape Province
- SAT2 FMD outbreak event in the Eastern Cape Province

Map 1: Open and closed FMD outbreaks since 2021



2. Provinces with no outbreaks/resolved outbreaks

Table 1: Summary of resolved outbreaks per province since 2021

Province	Nr of outbreaks reported	Date all outbreaks resolved
Free State	41	18 Oct 2024
Gauteng	7	13 Mar 2024
Limpopo	8	29 Aug 2023
Mpumalanga	1	26 Jun 2023
Mpumalanga (protection zone)	20	31 May 2024
North West	18	5 Mar 2024
Northern Cape	No outbreaks reported	Not applicable
Western Cape	No outbreaks reported	Not applicable

3. Provinces with unresolved outbreaks

Table 2: Summary of open outbreaks per province since 2021

Province	Number of open outbreaks	Number of closed outbreaks	Total number of outbreaks	Start date of last reported outbreak
Eastern Cape	39	1	40	01 September 2024
KwaZulu Natal	149	18	167	01 March 2025
Totals	188	19	207	

3.1 KwaZulu Natal Province:

In March 2025, three new outbreaks were reported in KwaZulu-Natal, bringing the total number of outbreaks in the province to 167. Currently, 149 outbreaks in this event remain open, while 18 have been resolved and officially closed with the WOA. H.

In 2021, the Minister of Agriculture, Land Reform, and Rural Development declared a Disease Management Area (DMA) in the Government Gazette to encompass epidemiologically high-risk areas. The DMA limits had been amended several times since in order to improve the efficacy of disease control efforts while protecting local agricultural production. Based on ongoing risk assessments and monitoring of the affected areas, the boundaries of the DMA

were recently updated in Government Gazette Notice No. 52318 dated 17 March 2025, after the outbreaks had spread to areas not previously affected.

A few infected locations have been detected outside of the newly declared DMA. Infected locations outside the DMA are similarly quarantined until the disease is eradicated.

Serological and clinical surveillance are ongoing in all affected areas to ensure early detection of disease, and to determine absence of disease in previously affected diptanks. Vaccination is continuing in diptanks, feedlots and around infected game reserves.

3.1.1 SAT2 outbreak event in KwaZulu Natal

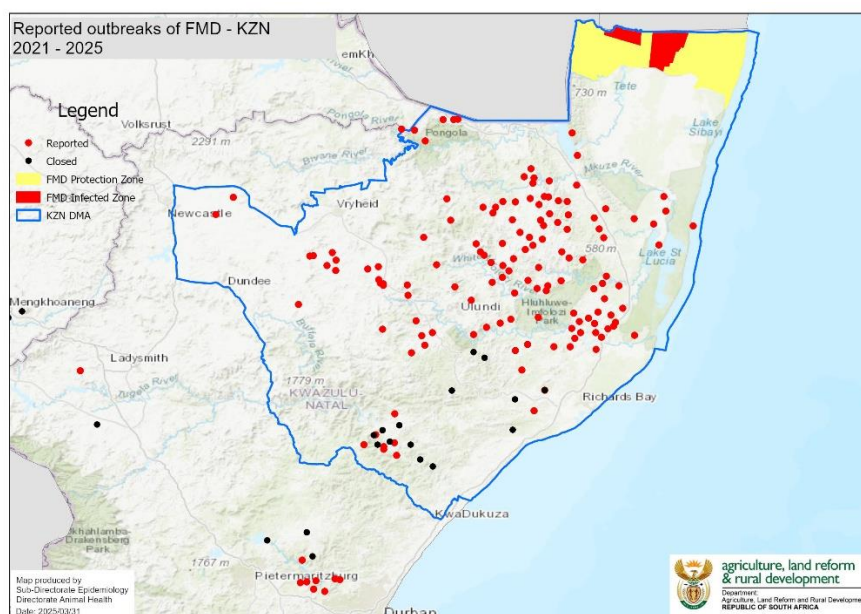
Three of the new outbreaks are linked to the ongoing SAT2 FMD event in the area that began in May 2021. Most open outbreaks are in communal dip tanks and small-scale farms. There are also five affected game reserves, all located in close proximity to one another. Complete resolution of this event is unlikely due to the FMD carrier status of the buffalo populations in these affected game reserves.

Eighteen SAT2 outbreaks in KZN have been resolved and closed with the WOA. Two feedlots outside the main outbreak area were depopulated through controlled slaughter and closed with the WOA in 2021. Quarantine was also lifted on sixteen diptanks after negative testing and absence of clinical disease, and consequently closed with the WOA.

3.1.2 SAT1 outbreak event in Mtubatuba

Cattle at a diptank in Mtubatuba were confirmed as FMD positive and the laboratory results indicated introduction of a SAT1 FMD virus into the area.

Map 2: Open and closed FMD outbreaks and the Disease Management Area in KwaZulu-Natal Province



3.2 Eastern Cape Province

3.2.1 SAT3 outbreak event in Humansdorp

Clinical signs of FMD were detected in April 2024 on a farm in Humansdorp in the Eastern Cape Province. Samples were submitted to the laboratory at Onderstepoort Veterinary Research and tested positive for FMD SAT3 on serology and PCR.

A total of 39 farms were found FMD positive, placed under quarantine and animals were vaccinated. In addition, a further 36 farms were pre-emptively vaccinated and also placed under quarantine. Movement controls have been implemented on all farms under quarantine.

The Department of Agriculture declared a Disease Management Area (DMA) on 26 July 2024 to prevent outward spread of the outbreaks and to decrease the viral load and infection pressure of the area. The DMA measures include the control of movements of animals out of, into, through and within the affected area. The main aim of the DMA is to prevent outward spread of the outbreaks, to areas not previously affected. In addition, the DMA aims to decrease further spread of the disease within the affected area, as this will decrease the viral load and infection pressure of the area.

No new outbreaks were detected since September 2024. Serological surveillance is ongoing in and around the DMA to ensure that the absence of circulating virus can be confirmed.

A serologically positive location was identified in the East London area of the Eastern Cape Province. Surveillance of the surrounding farms have identified a second positive location, but further testing on this farm and adjacent farms have not yielded any positive results and this farm was resolved with the WOA. Cattle on the remaining affected property were vaccinated and remain under quarantine, while the premises is being depopulated through controlled slaughter. The virus on the index farm was identified as a SAT2, similar to the SAT2 virus that caused the 2021 KZN SAT2 event. In parallel, a SAT3 virus was also identified in this location, which is the same as virus that caused the outbreaks in Humansdorp, described above.

Eastern Cape Province FMD outbreak 2024

Legend

- Reported outbreaks
- ECP FMD DMA

Map produced by
Sub-Directorate Epidemiology
Directorate Animal Health
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4 Resolution of outbreaks

Outbreaks on individual premises are resolved and closed with the WOA in one of the following manners:

4.1 Depopulation

Depopulation can be achieved either through controlled slaughter, or by removing animals with prior permission of the Director Animal Health to another approved property, such as another property also under quarantine for FMD. Once the affected premises is no longer populated by any FMD susceptible livestock, cleaning and disinfection for the purpose of lifting quarantine can commence. If the premises can be effectively cleaned and disinfected, then application for lifting of quarantine can be made 28 days after cleaning and disinfection. In the case of extensive kraals/camps which cannot be effectively disinfected, such kraals/camps will be regarded as disinfected if there have been no FMD susceptible species in the kraal/camp for at least 42 days.

4.2 Post-12 months testing

Premises like breeding farms and diptank areas, that are not depopulated following an outbreak of FMD, are subjected to rigorous laboratory testing of the remaining cloven-hoofed livestock to confirm cessation of virus circulation more than 12 months after the outbreak. Adult animals present during the outbreak are likely to test serologically positive due to infection and/or vaccination and the sensitivity of agent identification testing is not considered sufficient. Thus, serological surveillance is conducted more than 12 months after an outbreak, with sampling of young animals that were born after presumed cessation of virus circulation and/or vaccination and that, at the time of sampling, are already more than 6 months old to avoid detection of maternal antibodies. If the serological test results duly confirm the absence of FMD virus circulation, quarantine is lifted, but the adult sero-positive animals remain subject to life-long traceability requirements based on individual animal identification.

5. Confirmation of diagnosis

Confirmation of disease is done using a combination of the Solid Phase Competition ELISA (SPCE), Non-Structural Protein (NSP) ELISA, and Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR). All diagnostic tests are performed at the ARC Onderstepoort Veterinary Research Transboundary Animal Diseases laboratory (OVR-TAD).

6. Epidemiological investigation

A SAT 3 virus originated in early 2022 in Limpopo Province, causing a previous FMD outbreak event in that province (closed in August 2023) and then spread to North West Province, and from there to Free State, Gauteng and Mpumalanga Provinces as the previous 2022 multi-province SAT3 FMD outbreak event that was closed in October 2024. This same virus has been identified in the current SAT 3 outbreak event in the East London and Humansdorp areas in the Eastern Cape Province, which started in May 2024.

In KwaZulu Natal Province, epidemiological investigations to date have not revealed a source for the 2021 SAT2 FMD event. This same virus has been identified in the outbreak event in East London in the Eastern Cape Province, which started in May 2024.

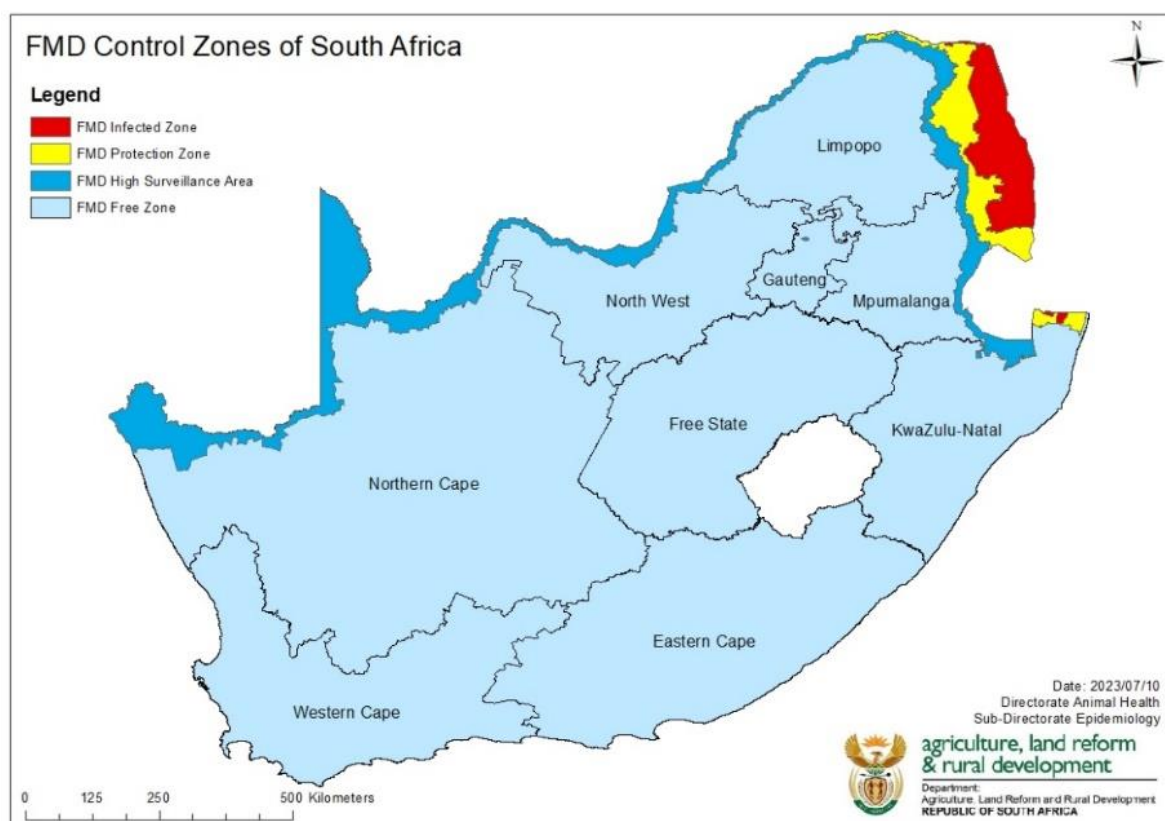
In February 2025, a SAT1 was also identified in the KZN Province. Although the route of introduction is now known, this virus is similar to a virus recently identified in the north of Kruger National Park.

7. FMD Control in South Africa

Although the FMD free zone without vaccination status was lost in 2019, the control measures for FMD remain in place as stipulated in the Veterinary Procedural Notice for the Control of FMD in South Africa. The map hereunder illustrates the FMD control zones that remain in place and references in this report to free zone, protection zone and infected zone must be regarded in this light. For the purposes of trade, this means that export is permanently prohibited from the FMD infected zone and the FMD protection zone.

Routine vaccination in the FMD protection zones in Limpopo Province and Mpumalanga Province is continuing. The vaccine being used is procured from the Botswana Vaccine Institute and encompasses all three SAT types. Only government officials are allowed to vaccinate animals as per the outbreak control plans.

Map 4: FMD Control Zones



Since October 2022, all livestock owners in the country must provide a declaration of health and origin and must obtain the necessary Stock Theft documents for all cattle, sheep, and goats to be moved from their property of origin onto other properties. Recipients of such animals must give written agreement to isolate new livestock for 28 days before introducing them into the main herds of the destination farm. This requirement was again emphasized in the Government Gazette Notice of 26 July 2024. All cattle presented at auctions are inspected before being admitted to the auction pens. If any animal presents with clinical signs, the auction is suspended while investigations are conducted, including laboratory confirmation ruling out FMD.


Director Animal Health