Foot and Mouth Disease outbreak report

30 September 2026

agriculture

Department:
Agriculture
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

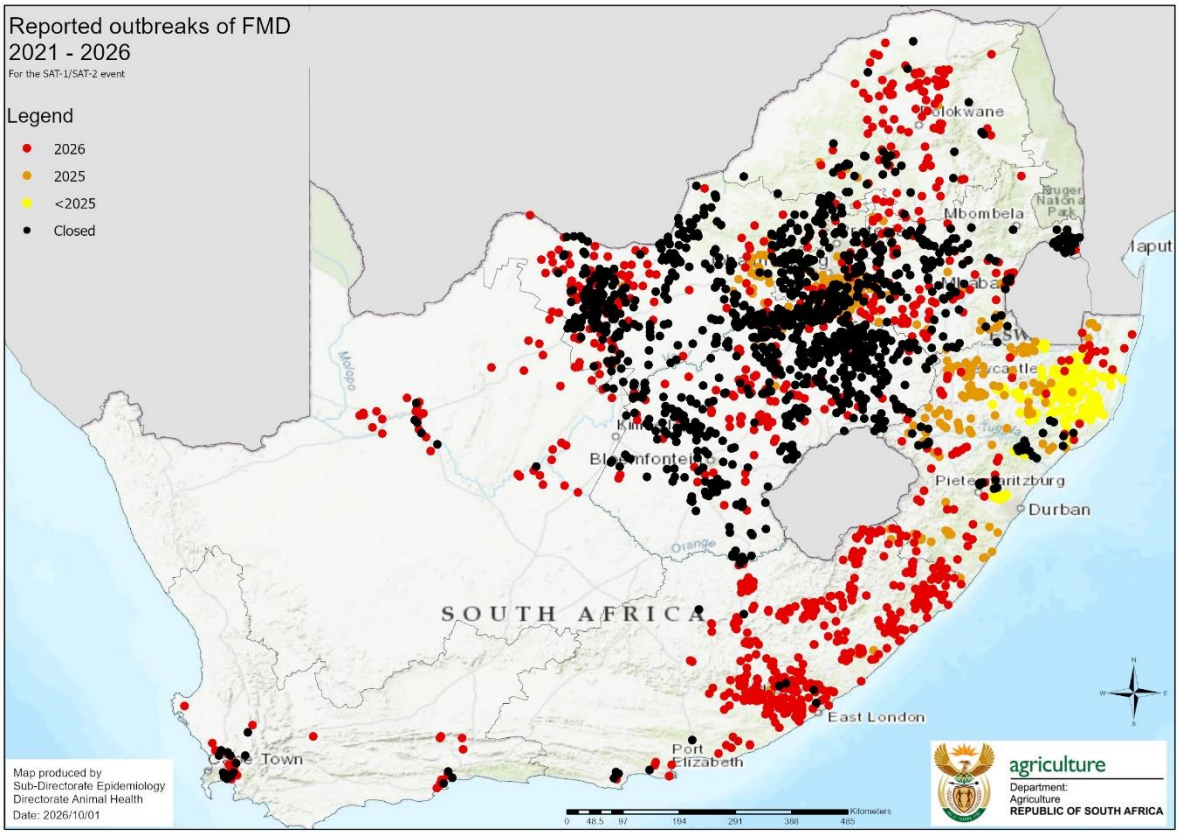
Report compiled by:
Directorate: Animal Health

The information in this report reflects the status as reported to the World Organisation for Animal Health at the date of this report.

1. Introduction and summary

Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) is a controlled disease in terms of the Animal Diseases Act, 1984 (Act No. 35 of 1984). South Africa had an internationally recognised FMD free zone without vaccination status, which was suspended in January 2019 following outbreaks in the previous free zone. Since 2019, a number of FMD outbreak events have occurred. Some events have been resolved and closed with the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH), while five outbreak events remain open.

South Africa currently has outbreaks of SAT1 and SAT2 occurring in mainly the northern and eastern parts of the country, as can be seen in the map below. The red dots indicate outbreaks that were reported to the WOAH in 2026, the orange dots indicate outbreaks that occurred in 2025, while the yellow markers indicate outbreaks that occurred prior to 2025. The black dots indicate outbreaks that have been resolved and closed with the WOAH.



Map 1: Outbreaks of unresolved events

The table below provides a summary of the FMD outbreaks per Province, as reported to the WOAH at the date of this report. "Open outbreaks" indicate outbreaks that have not yet been resolved and closed with the WOAH. These may be locations with current active viral circulation, or locations with previous outbreaks that are in the process of being resolved. "Closed outbreaks" have been resolved, quarantine lifted, and the outbreaks were reported as closed to the WOAH.

Province	Open outbreaks	Closed outbreaks	Total
Eastern Cape	**421**	**12**	**433**
Free State	**163**	**634**	**797**
Gauteng	**136**	**165**	**301**
KwaZulu Natal	**346**	**30**	**376**
Limpopo	**99**	**33**	**132**
Mpumalanga	**123**	**143**	**266**
North West	**143**	**329**	**472**
Northern Cape	**39**	**7**	**46**
Western Cape	**31**	**17**	**48**
Total	**1 501**	**1 370**	**2 871**

Table 1: Summary of outbreaks of unresolved events per Province

2. Status of FMD outbreaks per Province

2.1 Eastern Cape Province

2.1.1 2026 FMD outbreaks (SAT1)

Outbreaks of FMD were reported in all districts of the Eastern Cape Province. Currently there are 421 open outbreaks and 12 outbreaks were resolved and closed with the WOAH. A SAT1 virus was identified.

2.1.2 2024 SAT3 outbreak event in Humansdorp

Outbreaks (38) of FMD SAT3 were detected in April 2024 in the Humansdorp area in the Eastern Cape Province. The last clinical cases were seen in September 2024. All farms in

this outbreak event have been tested after 12 months to confirm their negative status and were subsequently resolved and closed with the WOAH.

2.1.3 2024 SAT2 outbreak event in East London

A serologically positive location was identified in the East London area of the Eastern Cape Province. Cattle on the 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.

2.2 Free State Province

There are currently 163 open outbreaks in the Free State, affecting all districts in the province, while 634 outbreaks have been resolved and closed with the WOAH. An outbreak of SAT2 FMD was confirmed in July 2025 and a SAT1 virus was also subsequently identified.

2.3 Gauteng Province

In April 2025, an outbreak of FMD SAT2 was detected and in October 2025, a SAT1 strain was also identified in Gauteng Province. Currently there is a total of 136 open outbreaks reported to the WOAH in Gauteng, while 165 outbreaks were resolved and closed with the WOAH.

2.4 KwaZulu Natal Province

There are currently 346 open outbreaks in KZN, affecting all districts in KZN, while 30 outbreaks have been resolved and closed with the WOAH. Most of the current open outbreaks in KZN are part of the ongoing SAT2 FMD event in the area that began in May 2021, although a SAT1 virus has also been identified. The positive locations include 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.

2.5 Limpopo Province

In December 2025, FMD was confirmed in Limpopo Province. There are currently 99 open outbreaks, while 33 outbreaks were resolved and closed with the WOAH. The presence of SAT1 virus was confirmed.

2.6 Mpumalanga Province

An outbreak of FMD was detected in April 2025 in Mpumalanga Province. There are currently 123 open outbreaks, while 143 outbreaks were resolved and closed with the WOAH. The presence of SAT1 and SAT2 viruses were confirmed.

2.7 North West Province

In June 2025, outbreaks of FMD were reported in North West Province. A total of 143 open outbreaks have been reported to the WOAH, while 329 outbreaks were resolved and closed with the WOAH. The presence of SAT1 and SAT2 viruses were confirmed.

2.8 Northern Cape Province

An outbreak of FMD was confirmed in early February 2026 in the Northern Cape Province. A total of 39 open outbreaks have been reported to the WOAH, while 7 outbreaks were resolved and closed with the WOAH. A SAT1 virus was identified.

2.9 Western Cape Province

FMD was detected in the Western Cape Province in November 2025. A total of 31 open outbreaks were reported, while 17 outbreaks were resolved and closed with the WOAH. Laboratory tests confirmed a SAT 1 virus.

3. Epidemiological investigation

The SAT2 FMD event started in KwaZulu Natal Province in May 2021. The same virus was identified in the outbreak event in East London in the Eastern Cape Province, which started in May 2024. In April 2025, the SAT2 virus was also implicated in the spread of the KwaZulu Natal outbreak to Mpumalanga province, and subsequently spread to Gauteng Province in April 2025, North West Province in June 2025 and Free State Province in July 2025.

In February 2025, a SAT1 was identified in the KwaZulu Natal Province. Although the route of introduction is not known, this virus is similar to a virus recently identified in the north of Kruger National Park. No further indications of the presence of this virus has been confirmed in KwaZulu Natal, despite ongoing surveillance.

In October 2025, a SAT1 virus was identified in Gauteng Province, and the same virus was subsequently isolated from outbreaks in all other provinces. This virus is not similar to the isolated SAT1 virus that was previously identified in KwaZulu Natal Province.

4 Control measures implemented

The 2024 FMD Contingency Plan was amended and the updated control measures were published in the Government Gazette on 7 July 2026. A summary of the new control measures are provided hereunder, while the full document is available on the Departmental website at the following link:

https://www.nda.gov.za/images/outbreaks/Foot%20and%20Mouth%20Disease%20Outbreak/Reports/2026/government-gazette-fmd-control-measures.pdf

4.1 Quarantine, biosecurity and movement restrictions

All FMD infected properties are immediately placed under quarantine on suspicion and/or confirmation of disease. Farmers are advised on the implementation of biosecurity on the farms. Properties adjacent to infected properties are placed under movement restriction pending clinical examination of cloven hoofed animals on the farm to confirm the absence of clinical signs of FMD. Clinical surveillance is also done on all properties with cloven hoofed animals in a wider surveillance area around a quarantined farm (typically 10km).

Day Zero is the date of clinical resolution for the premises and will be proposed by the supervising state veterinarian, based on clinical examination of all cloven-hoofed animals on the property. Day Zero may be determined by the absence of clinical signs for a 14 day period, or by the last date of vaccination in the absence of clinical signs. Day Zero affects other disease control processes, including controlled slaughter, and eventual lifting of quarantine.

Movements of live cloven hoofed animals and products are restricted from quarantined farms and are only allowed with specific risk mitigation. Products of cloven-hoofed animals must be processed to ensure inactivation of the FMD virus, in line with the WOAH Terrestrial Code. Live cloven hoofed animals may be removed from quarantined premises under specific conditions and with red cross permits issued by the veterinary services.

4.2 Vaccination

Vaccination against FMD must comply with the conditions for the legal use of a vaccine in South Africa. Susceptible animals on infected and suspect holdings will be vaccinated by the state veterinary services. The veterinary services may also vaccinate properties and areas deemed to be at high risk. Private veterinarians may be authorised to assist with these vaccinations where deemed necessary. There is also an option for private individuals and entities to perform voluntary vaccination of their animals in accordance with all legal requirements, which includes authorisation for this purpose, notification and reporting to the state veterinary services.

4.3 Animal Identification and Traceability

All cloven-hoofed livestock that have been vaccinated for FMD, and/or infected with or suspected of being infected with FMD, must be individually identified and recorded in a database that will ensure lifelong traceability.

4.4 Controlled slaughter

Controlled slaughter can be implemented on a voluntary basis to assist the animal owner to eradicate the disease from his/her land, and to ensure continuation of farming processes where possible. Animals must be clinically healthy when they go for controlled slaughter and there must be no indication of obvious circulating virus for at least 14 days on the premises (Day Zero must have been established). Controlled slaughter covers the period from Day 16 to Day 42 after Day Zero and includes safe disposal or processing of FMD risk material (heads and feet) to ensure that meat is safe and contain no FMD virus. The meat is allowed for sale on the local market, and may only be exported if specifically agreed to by an importing country.

5. Resolution of outbreaks

The amendment of the FMD Contingency Plan has provided new options for the lifting of quarantine. This has contributed to the high number of outbreaks that were resolved and closed in this report, compared to previous ones. Outbreaks on individual premises are resolved and closed with the WOAH in one of the following manners:

5.1 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.

5.2 Retaining and vaccinating animals

For premises like dairy farms, breeding herds and clusters of diptanks, that are not depopulated following an outbreak of FMD, quarantine can be lifted if there were no clinical signs of disease in animals on the premises or in the cluster for at least 42 days after Day Zero.

5.3 Repopulation during quarantine

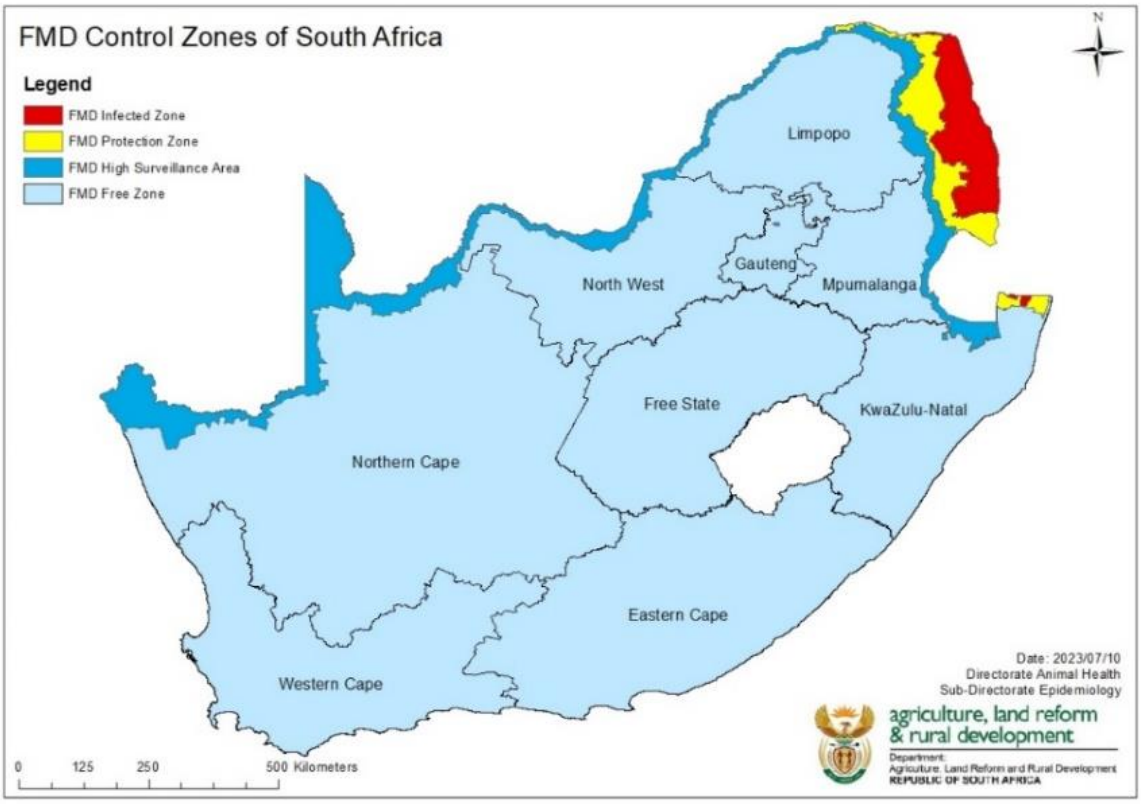
Where it is not economically feasible to perform complete depopulation, repopulation with vaccinated and/or FMD free animals will be allowed with state veterinary consultation. In such cases, quarantine can be lifted 42 days after Day Zero in the absence of clinical signs of FMD.

6. 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).

7. FMD Controlled Zones 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. Routine FMD vaccination by state veterinary services in the FMD protection zones in Limpopo Province and Mpumalanga Province is continuing.



Map 2: FMD Control Zones

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