

Foot and Mouth Disease outbreak report

31 August 2025



agriculture

Department:

Agriculture

REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Report compiled by:

Directorate: Animal Health

1. Introduction and summary

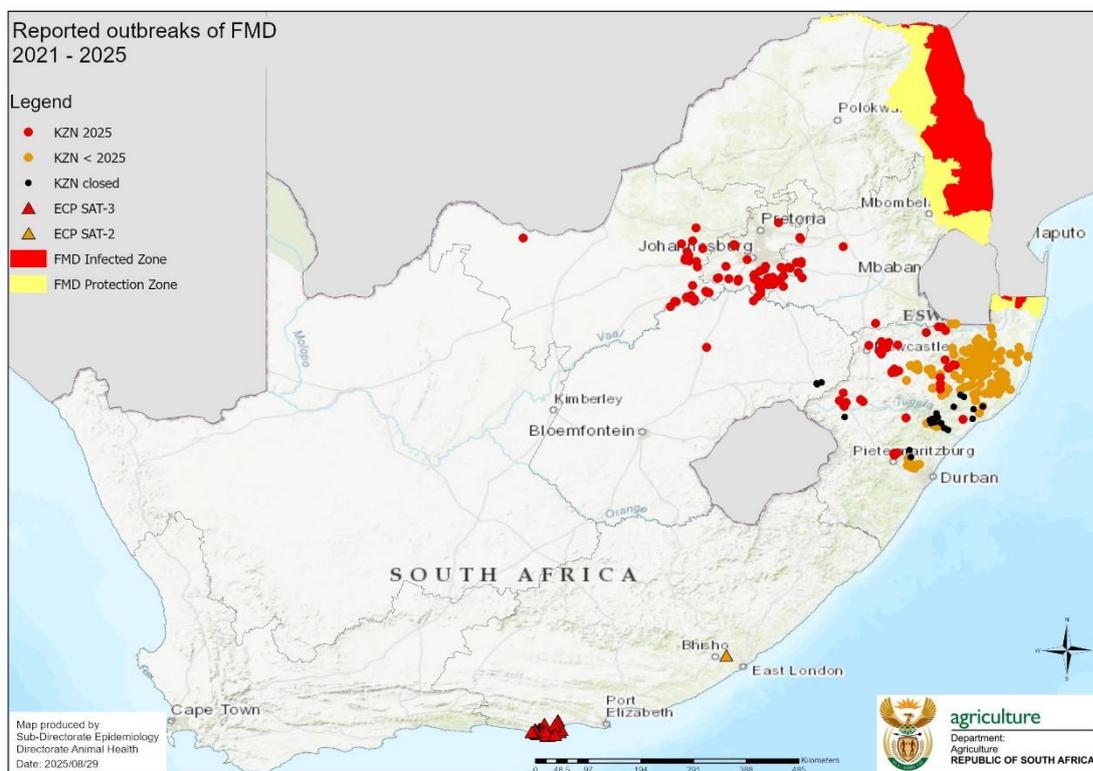
Prior to January 2019, South Africa maintained a Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD)-free zone without vaccination. However, since then, the country has reported eleven outbreak events that have affected this FMD-free zone. Currently, four outbreak events remain unresolved, while seven have been successfully 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, Mpumalanga, North West, Gauteng and Free State Provinces
- 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: FMD outbreaks since 2021



2. Provinces with no outbreaks/resolved outbreaks

2.1 Northern Cape Province

The Northern Cape Province has never reported outbreaks of FMD. Targeted Active Surveillance commenced in May 2025 and results to date have substantiated that no cases of FMD have been detected.

2.2 Western Cape Province

The Western Cape Province has never reported outbreaks of FMD. Targeted Active Surveillance commenced in May 2025 and results to date have substantiated that no cases of FMD have been detected.

2.3 Limpopo Province

Limpopo Province had SAT3 FMD outbreaks on 8 properties in 2021. All outbreaks were resolved and closed with the WOA on 29 August 2023. Following extensive surveillance in the diptanks around the affected area, the Limpopo Disease Management Area was rescinded on 15 June 2025.

2.4 Eastern Cape Province

2.4.1 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 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.

Controlled slaughter of cattle is ongoing on farms under quarantine. Over 15 000 animals have been slaughtered at designated abattoirs since the onset of the outbreaks in 2024. The risk materials are processed or disposed of and only known safe products are released into the local market. No meat from affected animals may enter the export market.

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. No new outbreaks were detected since September 2024. Serological surveillance was concluded in and around the DMA to confirm the absence of circulating virus. The DMA was rescinded on 15 June 2025 and quarantine remain only on the affected and/or

vaccinated farms. The remaining outbreaks are in the process of being resolved through 12 months post testing. (See point 4.2 of this report). So far, quarantine has been lifted on 3 farms after testing confirmed the absence of virus on the farms.

2.4.2 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. 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.

3. Provinces with outbreaks in 2025

Table 1: Summary of outbreaks per province

Province	Number of open outbreaks	Number of closed outbreaks	Total number of outbreaks	Start date of last reported outbreak
Free State	5	0	5	18 August 2025
Gauteng	55	0	55	21 August 2025
KwaZulu Natal	180	19	199	04 August 2025
Mpumalanga	9	0	9	01 August 2025
North West	28	0	28	13 August 2025
Totals	277	19	296	

3.1 KwaZulu Natal Province: SAT2 and SAT1 outbreak events

The total number of confirmed outbreaks in the province have increased to 199, following new outbreaks of FMD reported in the western part of the Province. Of these, 180 outbreaks are still unresolved, while 19 outbreaks have been resolved and officially closed with the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH).

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 again updated in Government Gazette Notice No. 52318 dated 17 March 2025, after the outbreaks had unfortunately spread to areas not previously affected. Fifteen of the infected locations have been detected outside of the DMA. Infected locations outside the DMA are similarly quarantined until the disease is eradicated.

Specific abattoirs were designated by the Director of Animal Health for the controlled slaughter of FMD-positive and/or vaccinated cattle. A total of 10 700 animals were slaughtered at designated abattoirs during the month of August 2025. 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

The current open outbreaks are part of the ongoing SAT2 FMD event in the area that began in May 2021. Outbreaks were initially limited to communal dip tanks and small-scale farms but have spread to commercial beef and dairy herds in recent months. 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.

Nineteen 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 seventeen 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. Further investigation and testing of surrounding diptanks did not yield any further positive results and the origin of this virus could not be traced.

3.2 **Mpumalanga Province: part of SAT 2 outbreak event**

An outbreak of FMD was detected in April 2025 in the Gert Sibande Municipality in Mpumalanga Province, which is linked to the outbreaks in KwaZulu Natal Province.

Surveillance and inspection of properties around this outbreak indicated that there was no outward spread of the disease at that period.

In June 2025, two new outbreaks were reported in the Dipaleseng local municipality in the western part of Mpumalanga. This was followed by a further two outbreaks in July 2025 in this same area, affecting Victor Khanye and Govan Mbeki Local Municipalities. Four additional outbreaks were confirmed in eMakhazeni, Steve Tshwete and Dr Pixley ka Isaka Seme Local Municipalities during the month of August 2025. This brings the total number of outbreaks in Mpumalanga Province to nine.

3.3 Gauteng Province: part of SAT2 outbreak event

In April 2025, an outbreak of FMD was detected in the West Rand Municipality of Gauteng. The SAT2 serotype was identified, which is the same as the strain of virus circulating in the KZN SAT2 outbreak event. Subsequent outbreaks were reported in Ekurhuleni, Lesedi, Midvaal, Mogale City, Randfontein, Westonaria, Emfuleni, Merafong City and City of Tshwane Municipalities. Currently there is a total of 55 affected properties in Gauteng, including communal kraals, feedlots, beef farms and dairy farms. To date, over 50 000 animals from affected properties in Gauteng have been slaughtered at designated abattoirs since the start of the current outbreak.

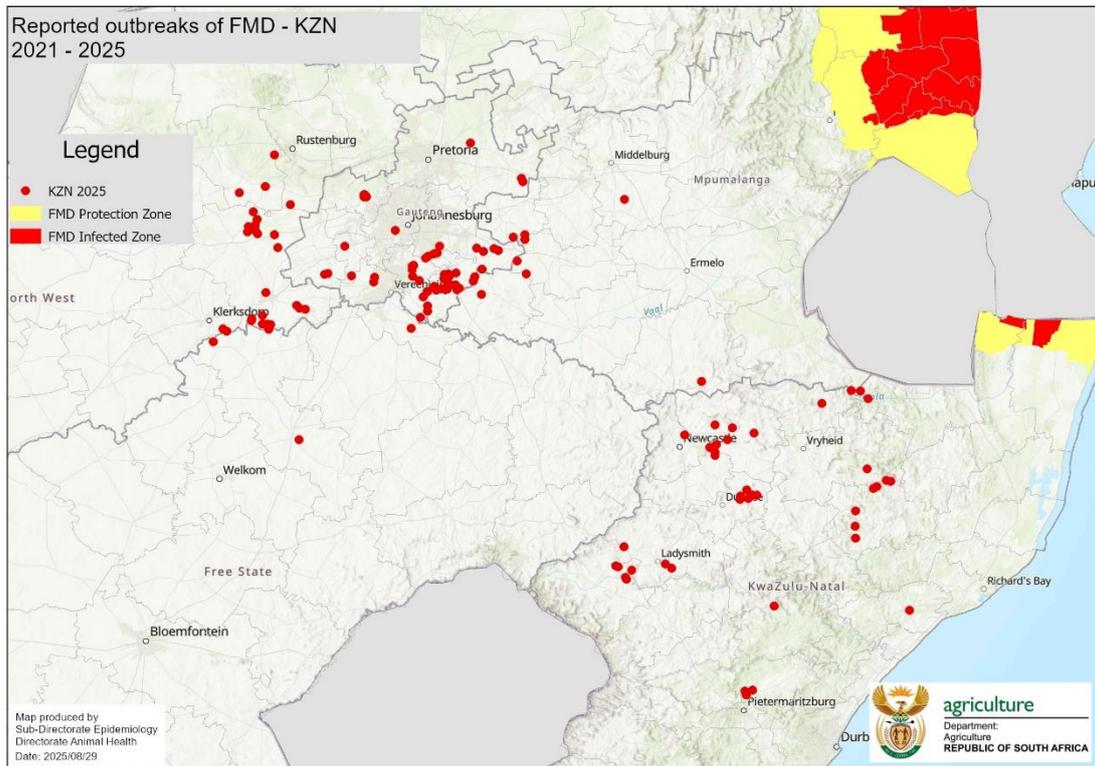
3.4 North West Province: part of SAT2 outbreak event

In June 2025, outbreaks of FMD were reported in North West Province in the JB Marks Local Municipality. Additional FMD outbreaks were confirmed in Kgetleng rivier, Madibeng, City of Matlosana and Kagisano/Molopo Local Municipality. A total of 28 properties have been affected, including mainly beef farms and some informal holdings.

3.5 Free State Province: part of SAT2 outbreak event

An outbreak of FMD was reported on a commercial farm in the Moqhaka local Municipality on 09 July 2025. A second positive farm was identified through backtracing in Metsimaholo, while three new outbreaks were also confirmed in Maluti-a-Phofung Local Municipality, bringing the total to five affected farms.

Map 2: Open FMD outbreaks in Free State, Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal, Mpumalanga and North West Provinces



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 dairy farms, breeding herds 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 month 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 April 2025, the SAT2 virus was also implicated in the spread of the KZN outbreak to Mpumalanga province,

and the same virus was isolated in an outbreak in Gauteng Province in April 2025 and North West Province in June 2025 and Free State Province in July 2025.

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. No further indications of the presence of this virus has been confirmed in KZN, despite ongoing surveillance.

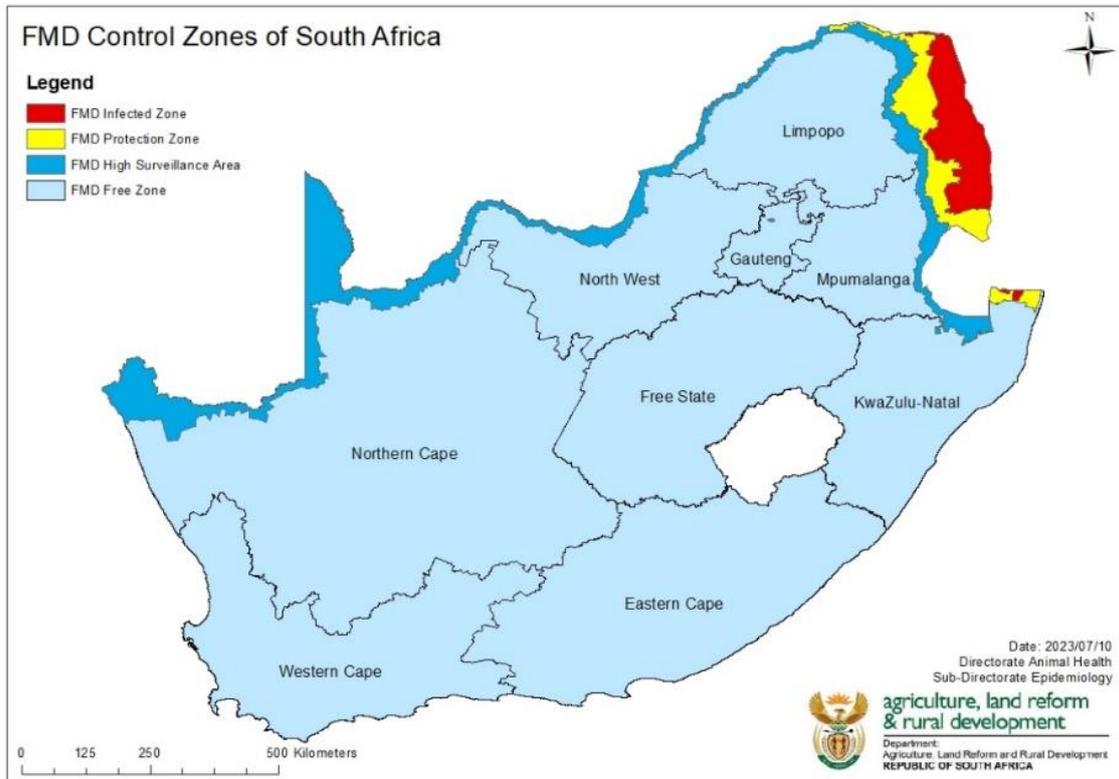
7. FMD Control in South Africa

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.

When outbreaks of FMD are detected, the affected properties are placed under quarantine. The immediate neighbours and most often the second layer neighbours are placed under precautionary quarantine, clinically inspected and samples submitted for serology. Any locations that are epidemiologically linked through forward or backward tracing are similarly placed under precautionary quarantine, animals are clinically inspected and serologically tested. Vaccination of affected properties proceeds as soon as possible after confirmation of the disease. Properties are vaccinated once if the animals are intended for slaughter (vaccinate to kill) or twice if the animals are intended for breeding or other purposes (vaccinate to live). In specific cases, vaccination of premises deemed to be at high risk of infection will be considered, even if infection has not been confirmed.

Map 3: 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 15 June 2025, which also outlines the biosecurity requirements for all gatherings of animals. 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.


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