Foot and Mouth Disease outbreak report

30 November 2025

agriculture

Department:
Agriculture
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Report compiled by:
Directorate: Animal Health

1. Introduction and summary

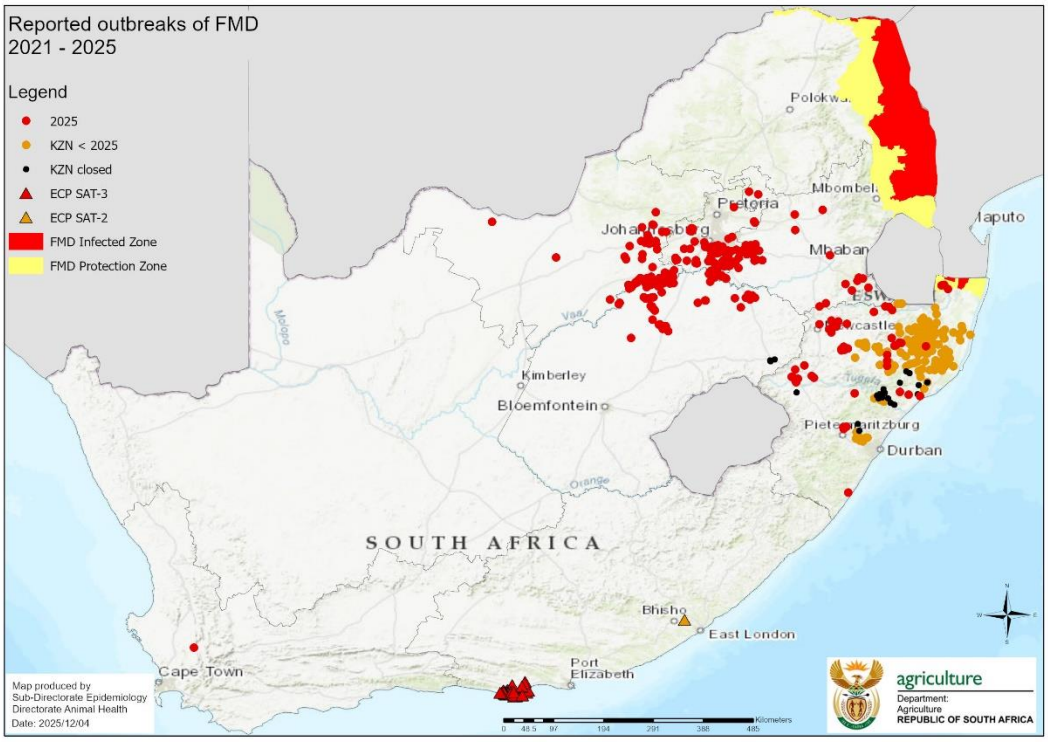
Prior to January 2019, South Africa maintained a Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD)-free zone without vaccination. However, since then, the country has reported twelve outbreak events that have affected this FMD-free zone. Currently, five outbreak events remain unresolved, while seven have been successfully 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
- SAT1 FMD outbreak event in Gauteng, Free State and Western Cape Provinces

Map 1: FMD outbreaks since 2021



2. Provinces with no outbreaks/resolved outbreaks in 2025

2.1 Provinces with no outbreaks

The Northern Cape Province has never reported outbreaks of FMD.

2.2 Limpopo Province SAT 3 outbreak

Limpopo Province had FMD outbreaks on 8 properties. All outbreaks were resolved and closed with the WOAH on 29 August 2023.

2.3 Eastern Cape Province: SAT2 and SAT3 outbreak events

2.3.1 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. 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. 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 37 outbreaks are in the process of being resolved through 12 months post testing. (See point 4.2 of this report). Quarantine has been lifted on 31 farms that were previously infected.

2.3.2 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	58	0	58	3 November 2025
Gauteng	105	1	106	20 November 2025
KwaZulu Natal	187	20	207	13 October 2025
Mpumalanga	30	0	30	13 November 2025
North West	50	0	50	30 October 2025
Western Cape	1	0	1	3 November 2025
Totals	**431**	**21**	**452**	

3.1 KwaZulu Natal Province

The total number of confirmed outbreaks in the province have increased to 207. Of these, 187 outbreaks are still unresolved, while 20 outbreaks have been resolved and officially closed with the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH). 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.

Twenty outbreaks in KZN have been resolved and closed with the WOAH. Two feedlots were depopulated through controlled slaughter and closed with the WOAH in 2021, while one feedlot was depopulated through controlled slaughter in 2025. Quarantine was also lifted on 17 diptanks after negative testing and absence of clinical disease and consequently closed with the WOAH.

Four abattoirs in KwaZulu Natal were designated by the Director of Animal Health for the controlled slaughter of FMD-positive and/or vaccinated cattle and four farms/feedlots were approved for controlled slaughter.

Most of the current open outbreaks in KZN are part of the ongoing SAT2 FMD event in the area that began in May 2021. In addition, laboratory results indicated introduction of a SAT1 FMD virus at a diptank in the Mtubatuba.

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

3.2 Mpumalanga Province

An outbreak of FMD SAT2 was detected in April 2025 in the Gert Sibande Municipality in Mpumalanga Province, which is linked to the outbreaks in KwaZulu Natal Province. A total of 30 confirmed outbreaks have been reported in Mpumalanga Province. The outbreaks have affected the municipalities of Dr Pixley ka Isaka Seme, Dipaleseng, Victor Khanye, Govan Mbeki, eMakhazeni and Steve Tshwete. Two abattoirs in Mpumalanga were designated by the Director of Animal Health for the controlled slaughter of FMD-positive and/or vaccinated cattle and ten farms/feedlots were approved for controlled slaughter.

3.3 Gauteng Province: SAT1 and SAT2 outbreaks

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. In October 2025, a SAT 1 strain of FMD virus was identified at one of the feedlots located in Gauteng Province. This virus is not related to the SAT1 virus circulating in KZN province.

Outbreaks were reported in Ekurhuleni, Lesedi, Midvaal, Mogale City, Randfontein, Westonaria, Emfuleni, Merafong City and City of Tshwane Local Municipalities. Currently there is a total of 105 outbreaks reported to the WOAH in Gauteng, including communal kraals, feedlots, beef farms and dairy farms. Two abattoirs in Gauteng were designated by the Director of Animal Health for the controlled slaughter of FMD-positive and/or vaccinated cattle, and 16 farms/feedlots were approved for controlled slaughter.

3.4 North West Province: SAT2 outbreaks

In June 2025, outbreaks of FMD were reported in North West Province in the JB Marks Local Municipality. Additional FMD outbreaks were confirmed in Kgetlengrivier, Madibeng, City of Matlosana and Kagisano/Molopo Local Municipality. A total of 50 outbreaks have been reported to the WOAH, on mainly beef farms and some informal holdings. One abattoir in North West was designated by the Director of Animal Health for the controlled slaughter of FMD-positive and/or vaccinated cattle and nine farms/feedlots were approved for controlled slaughter.

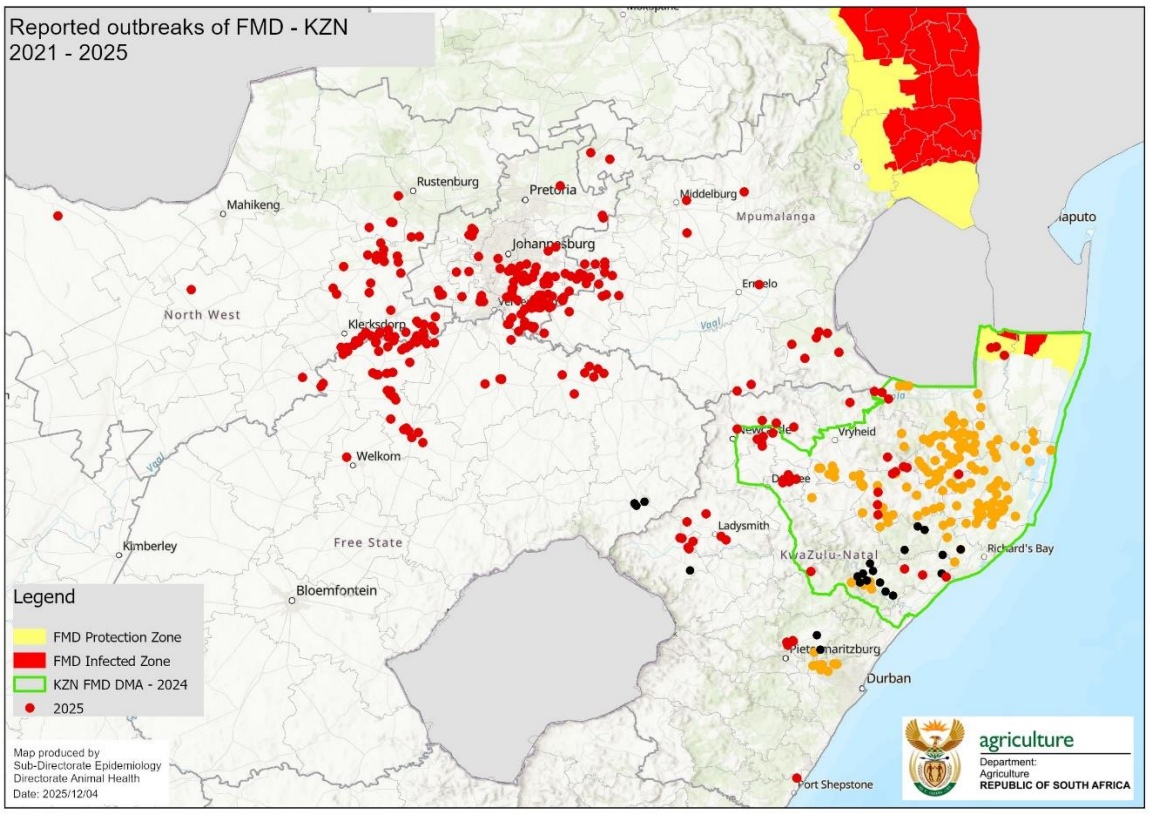
3.5 Free State Province: SAT2 outbreaks

An outbreak of SAT2 FMD was confirmed on a commercial farm in Moqhaka Local Municipality on 09 July 2025. The disease has since also been detected in Metsimaholo, Maluti-a-Phofung, and Mafube Local Municipalities. A total of 58 outbreaks have been reported to the WOAH. One abattoir in the Free State was designated by the Director of Animal Health for the controlled slaughter of FMD-positive and/or vaccinated cattle and 11 farms/feedlots were approved for controlled slaughter.

3.6 Western Cape: SAT 1 outbreak

An outbreak of FMD was detected on a farm in the Drakenstein Local Municipality in early November 2025. This was as a result of a traceback from another infected property in the Free State Province. Laboratory tests confirmed that this outbreak was caused by a SAT 1 virus, similar to the virus that caused the SAT1 outbreak in Gauteng in October 2025.

Map 3: FMD outbreaks in KZN, Mpumalanga, Gauteng, North West and Free State Provinces



4. Resolution of outbreaks

Outbreaks on individual premises are resolved and closed with the WOAH 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.

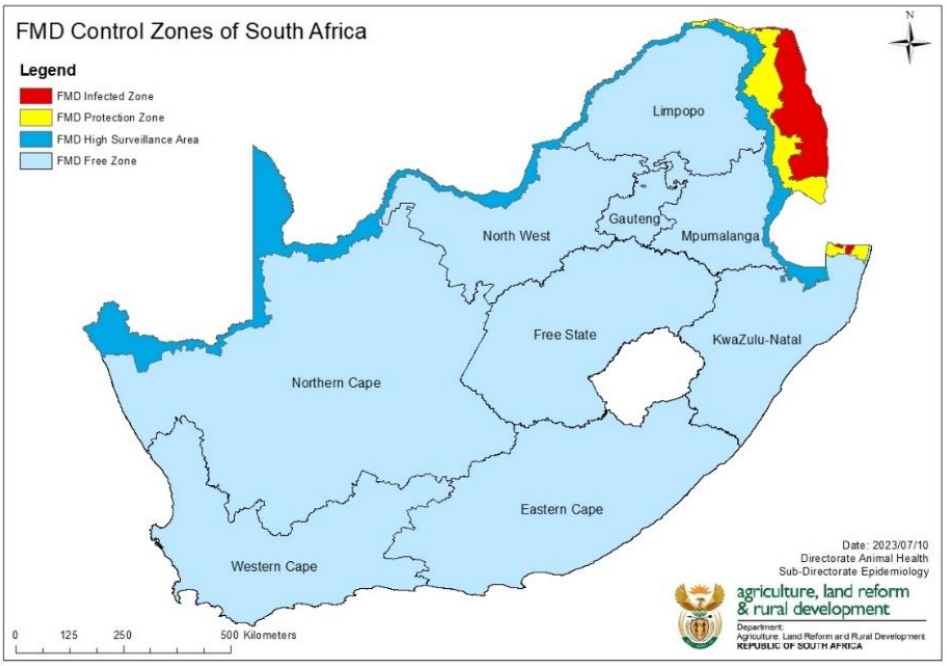
In February 2025, a SAT1 was also identified in the KZN Province. Although the route of introduction is now known, this virus is similar to a virus recently identified in the north of Kruger National Park. No further indications of the presence of this virus has been confirmed in KZN, despite ongoing surveillance.

In October 2025, a SAT1 virus was identified in Gauteng Province. This virus is not similar to the SAT1 virus that was identified in KZN Province and the origin of this virus is still unknown. This virus was subsequently also identified in an outbreak in the Western Cape Province, which was linked to illegal movement of animals.

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.

Map 4: FMD Control Zones



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.

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