Foot and Mouth Disease outbreak report

31 January 2026

agriculture

Department:
Agriculture
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Report compiled by:
Directorate: Animal Health

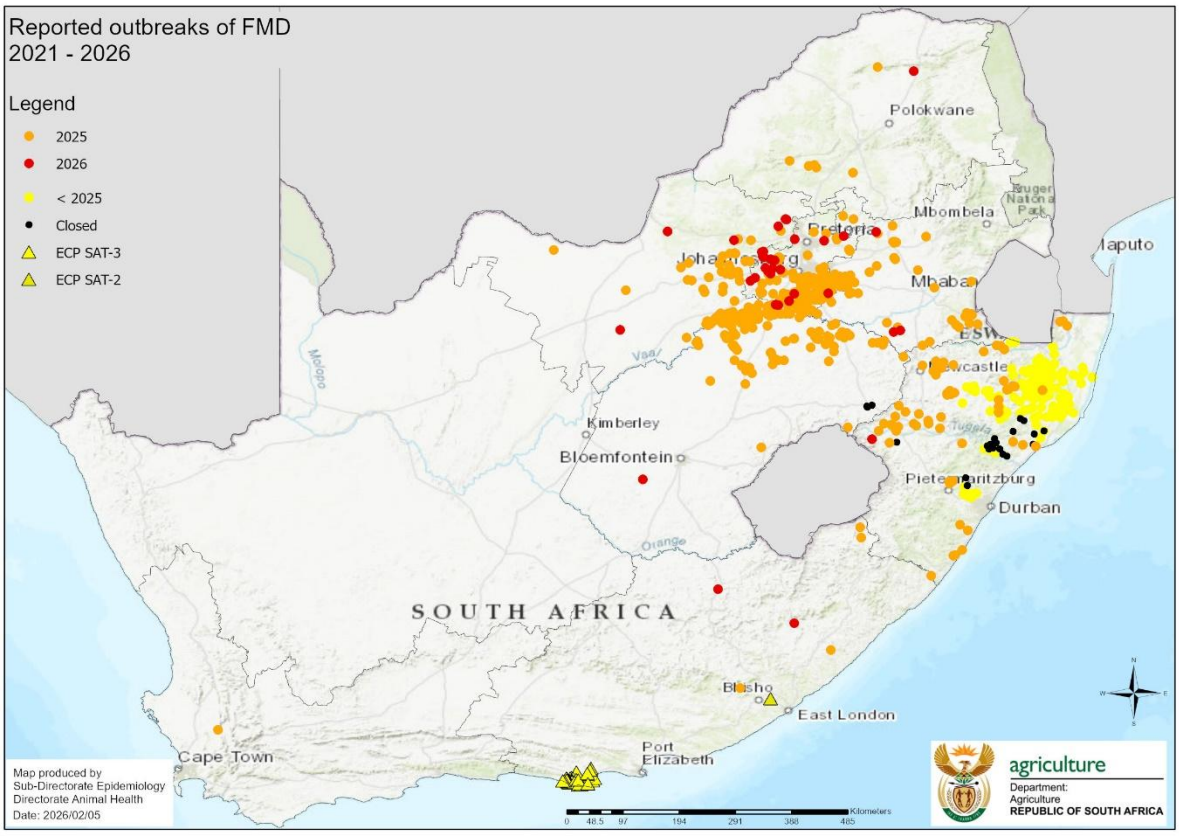
The information in this report reflects the status as reported to the World Organisation for Animal Health at the date of this report.

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: FMD unresolved outbreak events since 2019



2. Status of FMD outbreaks per Province

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	**6**	**0**	**6**
Free State	**202**	**4**	**206**
Gauteng	**145**	**3**	**148**
KwaZulu Natal	**200**	**20**	**220**
Limpopo	**6**	**0**	**6**
Mpumalanga	**50**	**0**	**50**
North West	**65**	**1**	**66**
Northern Cape	**0**	**0**	**0**
Western Cape	**1**	**0**	**1**
Total	**675**	**27**	**702**

Table 1: Summary of outbreaks of unresolved events per Province

2.1 Eastern Cape Province

2.1.1 FMD outbreaks in 2026

Suspect clinical signs of FMD were reported in January 2026 in the Districts of Amathole, Alfred Ndzo, Chris Hani, Joe Gqabi and OR Tambo. Samples were collected and results confirmed outbreaks of FMD on 6 locations, while a number of results are still pending.

2.1.2 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. A total of 39 farms were found FMD positive. In addition, a further 36 farms were pre-emptively vaccinated and also placed under

quarantine. The last clinical cases were seen in September 2024. Most of the farms in this outbreak event have been tested after 12 months to confirm their negative status and the event is in the process of being resolved.

2.1.3 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

An outbreak of SAT2 FMD was confirmed on a commercial farm in Moqhaka Local Municipality in July 2025, which is the same as the strain of virus circulating in the KZN SAT2 outbreak event. The disease has since also been detected in Lejweleputswa, Fezile Dabi, Xhariep and Thabo Mofutsanyane Districts. A total of 202 outbreaks have been reported to the WOAH. A pig farm tested positive for FMD and the virus was identified as SAT1, related to the strain of FMD virus identified in Gauteng Province in October 2025.

2.3 Gauteng Province

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. Outbreaks were reported in City of Tshwane, Randfontein and Germiston Districts. Currently there is a total of 145 open outbreaks reported to the WOAH in Gauteng. Three outbreaks were resolved and closed with the WOAH, following depopulation through controlled slaughter.

2.4 KwaZulu Natal Province

There are currently 200 unresolved outbreaks in KZN, affecting all districts in KZN. 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. 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.

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.

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.

2.5 Limpopo Province

In early December 2025, clinical signs of FMD were reported from a village in the Vhembe District and tests confirmed FMD. Positive results were confirmed for 6 locations in Vhembe, Waterberg and Capricorn Districts, with more locations being investigated following reports of suspect lesions. The typing of the virus has not yet been concluded.

2.6 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 50 confirmed outbreaks have been reported in Mpumalanga Province. The outbreaks have affected the Gert Sibande and Nkangala Districts.

2.7 North West Province

In June 2025, outbreaks of FMD were reported in North West Province in the JB Marks Local Municipality. A total of 65 open outbreaks have been reported to the WOAH, in the districts of Bojanala, Ngaka Modiri Molema, Dr Ruth Segomotsi Mompati, and Dr Kenneth Kaunda.

2.8 Northern Cape Province

The Northern Cape Province has never reported outbreaks of FMD.

2.9 Western Cape Province

Positive cases 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 a SAT 1 virus, similar to the virus that caused the SAT1 outbreak in Gauteng in October 2025. This outbreak was contained to a single property and is in the process of being resolved.

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 KZN 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 also identified in the KZN 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 KZN, despite ongoing surveillance.

In October 2025, a SAT1 virus was identified in Gauteng Province, and the same virus was subsequently isolated from cattle in the Western Cape Province and pigs in the Free State 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.

4 Control measures implemented

The following controlled measures are implemented on infected premises, depending on the situation on the ground:

4.1 Quarantine, biosecurity and movement restrictions

All FMD infected properties are immediately placed under quarantine on suspicion of disease. Movement of live cloven hoofed animals and unprocessed products off the farm are not allowed. Farmers are advised on the implementation of biosecurity on the farms.

If the outbreak is detected in animals that are not fenced in to prevent contact with other animals, where movement control cannot be effectively applied, or where there is not good cooperation with the owners of the animals or the land on which the animals are found, then the declaration of a disease management area (DMA) will be considered. A DMA is an area that is considered as one epidemiological "unit", where premises are potentially epidemiologically linked. All properties in the area will be subjected to the same movement control conditions.

4.2 Vaccination

Vaccination against FMD is strictly government controlled in South Africa and may only be performed by state veterinary services on instruction by the Director Animal Health. The use of vaccination is considered as a suitable way to control an outbreak of FMD, taking into account the size of the affected area, the farming practises involved, speed of spread and effectiveness of control measures already implemented.

4.3 Controlled slaughter

In order to expedite the depopulation of affected premises, controlled slaughter can be implemented on a voluntary basis to assist the animal owner to eradicate the disease from his/her land. 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. Controlled slaughter includes safe disposal or processing of FMD risk material 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

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. If the premises can be effectively cleaned and disinfected, then application for lifting of quarantine can be made 28 days after cleaning and disinfection.

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.

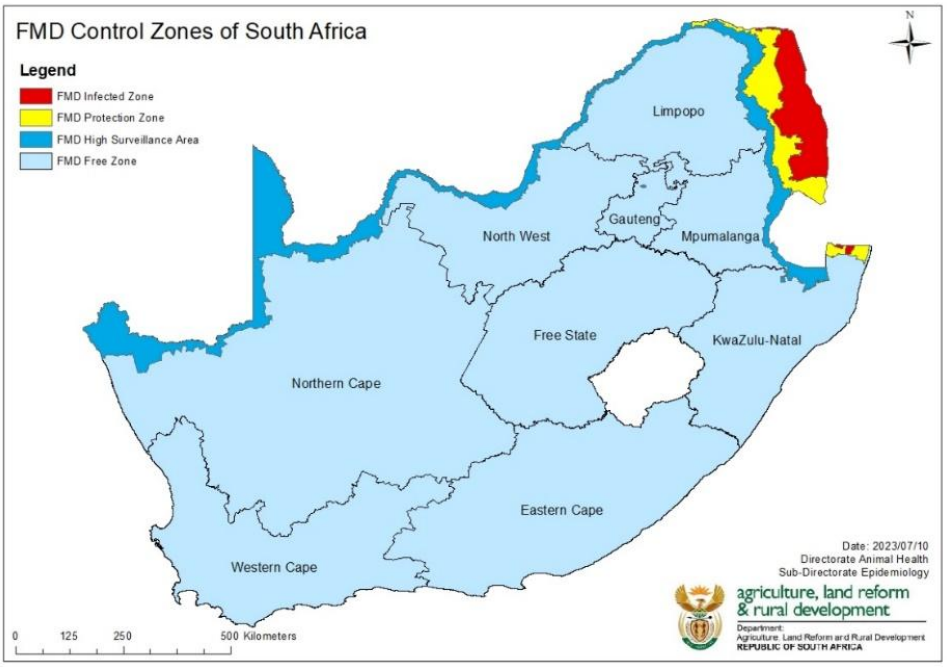
5. Confirmation of diagnosis

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. 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 contain all three SAT types. Only government officials are allowed to vaccinate animals as per the outbreak control plans.

Acting Director: Animal Health