

**Voluntary Report** – Voluntary - Public Distribution

**Date:** May 19, 2021

**Report Number:** SF2021-0032

**Report Name:** Avian Influenza Outbreak in Gauteng North West and Western Cape Provinces of South Africa

**Country:** South Africa - Republic of

**Post:** Pretoria

**Report Category:** Poultry and Products

**Prepared By:** Makoma Makgopa

**Approved By:** Kyle Bonsu

**Report Highlights:**

On April 13, 2021, the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development announced that an avian influenza outbreak was detected in the Gauteng Province that led to the culling of 240,000 birds. Six days later, two additional commercial chicken properties tested positive for the H5 variant. One is a commercial chicken-layer farm also in Gauteng; the second one is a commercial chicken parent breeder farm in the North West Province. During May, two more outbreaks were reported in the Western Cape and in Gauteng. As a result of these outbreaks, Botswana and Mozambique restricted imports of poultry from South Africa. Notably, one of the three affected facilities is a registered compartment for export.

## **Background**

South Africa has experienced multiple Avian Influenza outbreaks in six commercial farms across three provinces during the month of April and May 2021. The outbreak is suspected to be linked to the flu caused by the European wild birds.

On April 13, 2021, the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development (DALRRD) announced that an avian influenza (also known as “bird flu”) outbreak was detected in Ekurhuleni Municipality in the Gauteng Province. The outbreak occurred in a commercial layer farm. The samples from the farm were taken to the lab, and tested positive for the H5 strain of the avian influenza. Upon confirmation of the H5 strain, the birds in the affected house were immediately culled by the Gauteng Department of Agriculture and Rural Development authorities. The Department mentioned that the farm was also part of the H5N8 highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) outbreak in 2017. (See report [Southern African countries suspend poultry imports from South Africa Pretoria South Africa - Republic of 7-20-2017](#))

DALRRD made arrangements for the samples to be urgently tested at Onderstepoort Veterinary Research (OVR), to determine the pathotype (whether it is high (HPAI) or low pathogenic avian influenza (LPAI)) as well as to determine the N type of the virus.

The avian influenza strain was confirmed to be highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) H5N1. Further genetic evaluation confirmed that it is a Clade 2.3.4.4 virus that groups closely with the currently circulating virus strains in wild birds in Europe. The entire farm was culled (approximately 270,000 birds) and approval was obtained for burial at a nearby dumping site under controlled conditions and under state veterinary supervision.

On April 19, an additional two commercial chicken properties tested positive for H5. One is a commercial chicken layer farm in City of Tshwane, Gauteng. The other is a commercial chicken parent breeder farm in J.B Marks Local Municipality in the North West Province. Both these farms have been quarantined and control measures are being implemented.

On May 6, the Western Cape Department of Agriculture reported that an Avian Influenza outbreak was detected at a broiler breeder farm in the Worcester area. The provincial agriculture department reported that the affected farm is under quarantine, and the process of humanely culling the affected commenced thereafter. While on May 7, another outbreak was reported in a commercial chicken farm in the Gauteng Province, Randfontein area.

## **Countries Put Restrictions on South Africa’s Poultry Imports**

Upon DALRRD’s announcement, Botswana, Namibia and Mozambique put restrictions on the imports of poultry from South Africa. One of the three affected facilities is a registered compartment for export. In agreement with international trade recommendations, Namibia and Botswana have only banned poultry and poultry raw products from this affected compartment. Both countries therefore still allow the export of poultry and poultry raw products from registered compartments within South Africa that comply with the monthly surveillance requirements and are on the NAI free compartment list compiled by the DALRRD Directorate for Animal Health. In addition to these restrictions, Lesotho and Hong Kong have restricted the importation of poultry and poultry products from Gauteng Province.

## South Africa's Exports of Poultry Products to the World

South Africa is not a major poultry exporter, as the majority of their poultry exports go to the Southern African Development Community (SADC) region because they can't access other markets as a result of sanitary and phytosanitary issues. Table 1 below shows the top five export destinations for South African poultry products. For the last four years, Lesotho has been the leading importer, followed by Mozambique with 14,301 tons. The outbreak of Avian Influenza in the country will derail the export expansion plans by the industry through the Poultry Master Plan and decrease South Africa's poultry exports further.

**Table 1: South Africa's Leading Export Markets for Poultry Products (Tons)**

Country	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Lesotho	17,110	19,497	21,291	23,680	23,181
Mozambique	18,763	17,426	12,330	14,733	14,301
Namibia	16,799	13,437	7,125	5,745	8,015
Eswatini	2,013	2,147	2,216	2,600	3,152
Botswana	4,049	3,383	3,389	2,840	2,305
Others	21,070	12,728	7,213	4,931	4,270
Total	79,804	68,618	53,564	54,529	55,224

Source: South African Revenue Services

**Attachments:**

No Attachments.