

New bird flu cases reported

South Africa has reported eight new cases of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) H5N8 to the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE). The new cases were reported in Western Cape, Mpumalanga, and North West provinces bringing the total number of outbreaks to 24 since June 2017.



Myriams-Fotos via [pixabay](#)

Ten outbreaks were confirmed in commercial chickens, three in commercial ostrich, five in wild birds, three in birds that were kept as a hobby and three outbreaks were confirmed in backyard poultry.

Spokesperson for Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries Ministry, Bomikazi Molapo, said that all affected properties have been placed under quarantine and disease control measures have commenced.

"The continued cooperation of the public and the poultry industry, in the timeous reporting of sick and dying birds to Government Veterinary Services, is vital for the effectiveness of disease control measures instituted. The department, therefore, thanks the public and the poultry industry for their support in this regard," Molapo said.

Guidelines of compensating affected farms approved

During a meeting between Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries Minister Senzeni Zokwana and executives in the poultry industry, the industry raised concerns on compensation and guidelines relating to the affected farms.

Molapo said the draft guidelines have been completed and are subject to ministerial approval. The approved guidelines will be released to the industry and public by 1 September 2017.

Closing the supply gap

The industry also requested to be given permission to import fertile eggs to close the supply gap as a result of culled birds.

Molapo said that only one company has submitted an application on 24 August 2017 for the importation of hatching eggs, adding that the department is still performing the prescribed risk analyses to determine the appropriate level of risk. "We need to conduct a thorough risk assessment in order to avoid exposing the country to other disease risks. The basic work has been conducted and there are two options which will be presented to the poultry industry.

"The first one is for the risk mitigation to be conducted in South Africa through stringent quarantine measures on arrival of the hatching eggs from their country of origin. The second option will be for stringent quarantine measures in the country of origin where eggs will come from compartments free of specified diseases that the department will approve, with less stringent post arrival quarantine measures," Molapo explained.

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