



10 September 2017

### **UPDATE ON THE APPLICATION TO VACCINATE AGAINST AVIAN INFLUENZA H5N8**

The AI task team of the Poultry Group submitted a discussion document on AI vaccination for DAFF to consider on the 29<sup>th</sup> of August. Since then it has not been possible to meet with DAFF officials, largely because most of the poultry vets were in Edinburgh for the WVPA Congress. We hope to meet with DAFF this coming week. Once we have had that meeting, we will have a better idea of their view. To date, they have been opposed to vaccination, but I believe the most recent outbreaks may have caused them to reconsider.

Various vaccines are available and solid technical presentations have been shown to the poultry vets. It seems that there are a number that would probably be effective. Unfortunately there is very limited field data about any of them, so whatever we do will be somewhat experimental. Any intervention is going to have a number of unexpected consequences. The consequences of no intervention is becoming dramatically apparent!

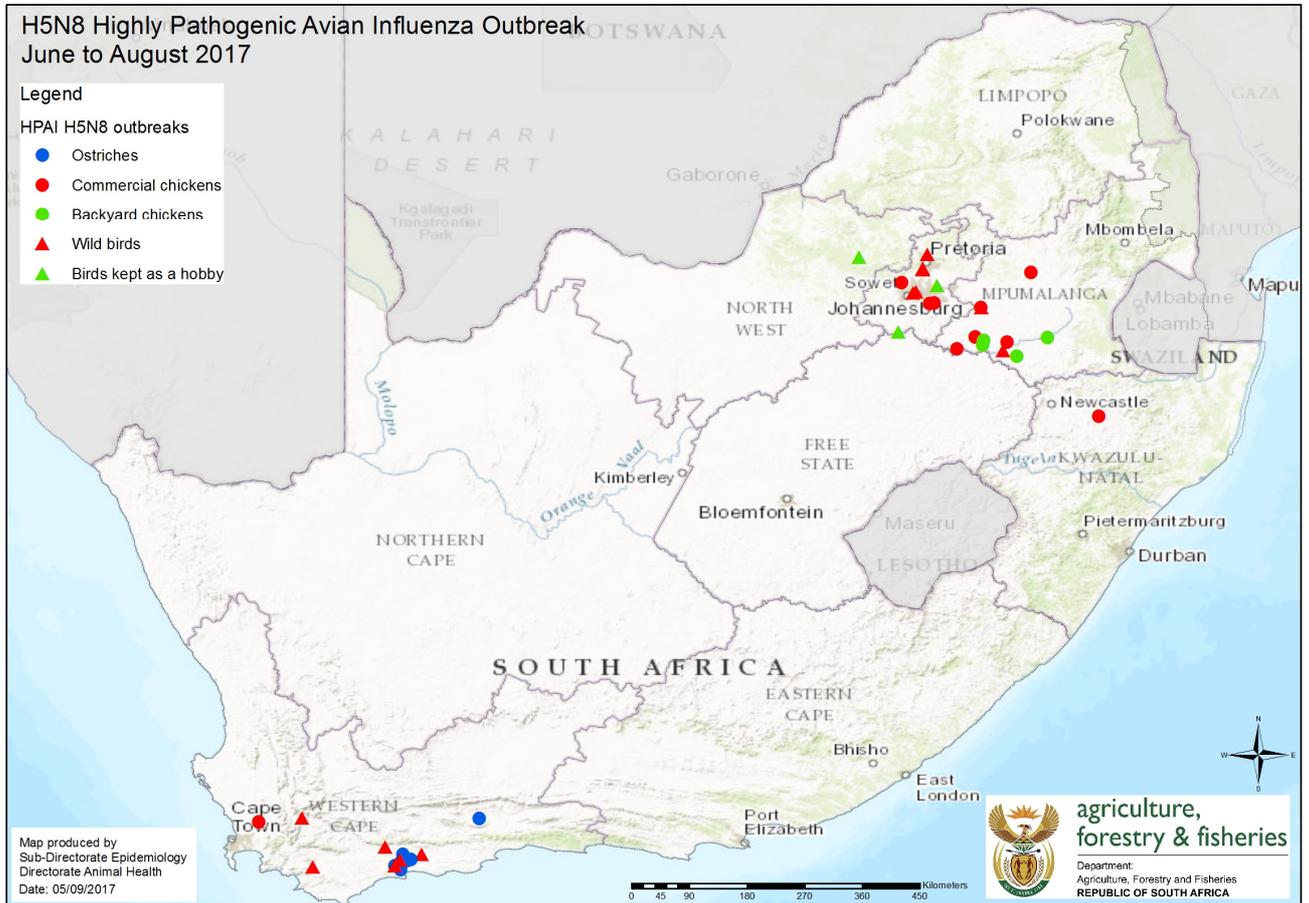
*Even if vaccination were approved by DAFF, there will be a substantial delay in arranging vaccine approvals and for the importation of the products.*

There have been various discussions about the possibility of importing hatching eggs into South Africa to make up some of the shortfall. A draft protocol for egg importation has been circulated for comment until the 15<sup>th</sup> of September. I have reacted to the document – it is onerous on the importer, but probably not impossible to achieve, provided eggs can be obtained from HPAI-free compartments internationally. I am not sure if all interested parties have had sight of the document – I am happy to send to anyone who needs it.

*Even if egg imports are allowed – we are short of between 1 and 2 million hatching eggs per week. I am not sure anyone anywhere in the world would be able to supply that sort of quantity of eggs.*

A meeting was held with the Ostrich industry a week ago, we now have written confirmation that they have spoken to their trade partners and are not opposed to vaccination of poultry against HPAI. This is a significant step as DAFF has indicated that one of the reasons for opposing vaccination is the concern about the exportation of ostrich products. Given the developing shortage of chicken product (both eggs and broilers) in South Africa, I also have to think that concerns about our export markets must be fading for all producers?

**THE DISEASE SITUATION AT PRESENT**



The most recent map from DAFF. Since the map was drawn, there have been additional outbreaks in laying hens in the Paarl area. The total number of hens to be destroyed in that area will easily exceed a million hens. There has also been an outbreak in layer-breeder hens near Bothaville – this will impact availability of layer chicks. There are also indications that HPAI is being detected in wild birds and also in backyard poultry flocks of various sorts.

**DR SPR BISSCHOP**