



Updates on Animal Disease Outbreaks in Gauteng Province

Rabies

By the end of September, a total of **eight animal rabies** cases had been identified in Gauteng Province. This is more than the 'normal threshold' and is therefore considered to be an outbreak. Usually up to three cases may be detected annually, and these are often isolated events - single wild animals or imported domestic dogs from other provinces with endemic rabies situations. The species involved so far have been six black-backed jackals, one honey badger and a domestic dog. Most cases were reported in June/July (n=6), and one case was reported each in August and September (see *August bulletin for details*). All cases were identified as the **canid biotype**. The concern that the virus may spread further within wildlife reservoirs and susceptible dogs is high, with subsequent increased risk of infection in people.

No human cases have been reported in the province, although several people who were exposed to rabid animals have

received post-exposure prophylaxis treatment. All are doing well.

Gauteng Veterinary Services (GVS) carried out extensive **rabies vaccination & awareness campaigns** in August and September. This included stationary vaccination campaigns and door-to-door visits in the area surrounding positive cases. In total, 6128 and 11191 rabies vaccinations were administered to pets by GVS in August and September respectively. Of these, 3823 vaccinations were given in the Randfontein state veterinarian area. To celebrate World Rabies day (28 September), GVS also donated 2500 doses of rabies vaccine to welfare organisations in the province, to further this important cause. Other stakeholders also got involved in rabies awareness events. The National Animal Health Forum and DALRRD coordinated a free-access rabies webinar and provided valuable information about the disease. Additional online sessions were held by NICD and even Netcare.

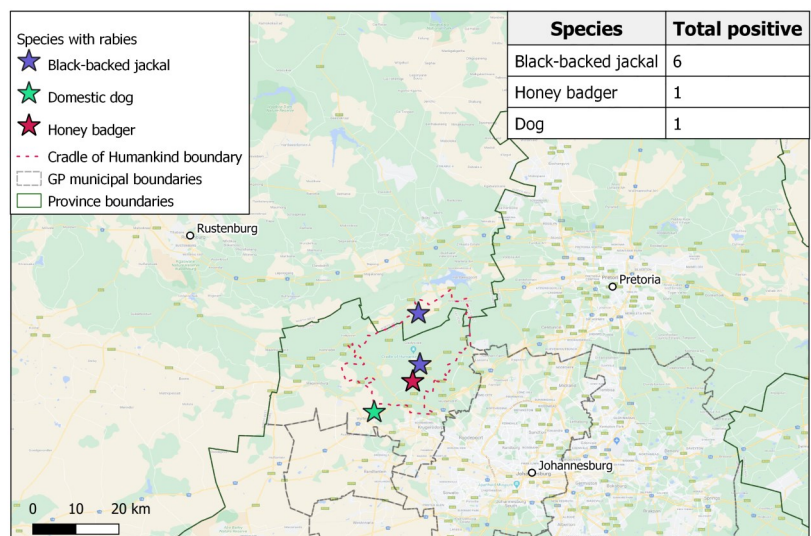
Without accurate population data, it is difficult to say what sort of vaccine coverage has been reached. From the records of the communities served by GVS in the Randfontein state veterinarian area, there are at least ±1600 dogs and cats. However, an unknown proportion of the pets in the area rather make use of the private veterinary sector, or do not access veterinary services at all. GVS are satisfied with the number of vaccines administered and the area covered.

Surveillance for animal rabies cases is ongoing. This year, 43 specimens have been tested at OVR-ARC for Gauteng Province. To send specimens for testing or report a suspicious case, please [contact](#) your local state vet. GVS urges everyone to be alert for possible rabies in animals; do not approach or touch any strange animals (domestic/wild); vaccinate the dogs in your community; be informed about appropriate [post-exposure](#) prophylaxis; know who your local state veterinarian is (*page 3*).



Fig 1: GVS focused on rabies vaccination campaigns this month.

Photo by Karien Kruger



2021 Animal rabies outbreaks
 8 October 2021

Created by Epidemiology, Gauteng Vet Services, using QGIS (<http://qgis.osgeo.org>)

Some are superimposed due to close proximity.

Fig 2: Distribution of confirmed animal rabies.

African swine fever (ASF)

There are **seven** outbreaks under quarantine by GVS. Although there were no new outbreaks in September, there has been an average of three outbreaks per month since October 2020 and more are expected. Most of the current outbreaks are in the southern and eastern areas of Gauteng Province (Sebokeng & Vosloorus) with one in Merafong area. None of these outbreaks have been linked by investigations and tracing activities.

Risky practices identified include buying pigs with unknown health status either at auctions or from unknown individuals, free-roaming and swill-feeding; poor biosecurity is widespread; and lack of outbreak reporting in some places allowed the disease to fester and affect more pig keepers. Gauteng 2021 outbreaks have been caused by **genotype I and II**. The domestic ASF cycle appears to be established in the informal pig market system and will be difficult to eradicate without a multi-sector committed partnership approach.

Highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) H5N1

There are **five** outbreaks of HPAI A(H5N1) under quarantine by GVS now, all commercial poultry farms. The frequency of outbreaks in Gauteng Province seems to have declined, with none reported in September. However, officials should remain on high alert as the virus is still circulating with new outbreaks still being detected in other provinces. Genetic sequencing of the viruses obtained so far indicates that the only farm-to-farm spread was to a Tshwane farm, from another farm where pullets were sourced from. All other HPAI outbreaks in Gauteng Province appear to have been separate introductions from the environment (wild birds), with a wide genetic variability. This could explain the seemingly random distribution of outbreaks. Yet farm-to-farm spread was identified as a major route of transmission in the UK and EU outbreaks, and since upholding high biosecurity standards is the only way to keep the disease out of farms, it remains paramount. Poultry industry veterinarians have estimated losses of ~36 000 broilers and ~839 000 layers due to culling to control the disease. This represents about 0.3% and 7.7% of the provincial broiler & layer flocks respectfully.

Malignant catarrhal fever (MCF)

A case was confirmed in a Holstein Heifer in the **City of Tshwane**. The owner had started to treat it for pneumonia, but the private vet came and observed clinical signs typical of MCF (Bilateral ventral corneal oedema & purulent nasal discharge) and the necessary test was performed. There was direct contact between the cattle and sheep on the farm.

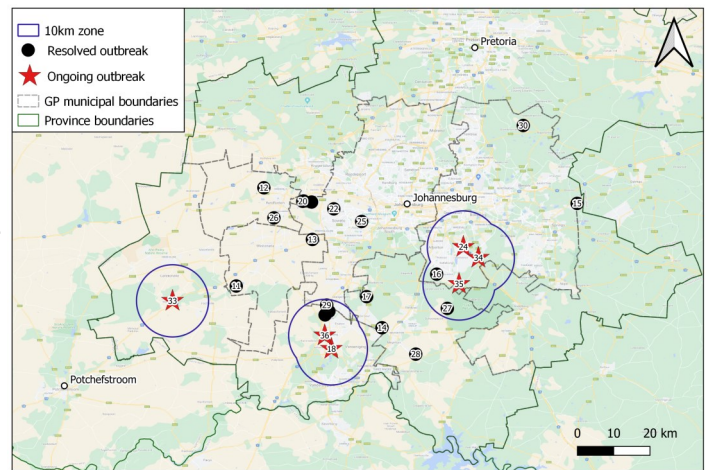
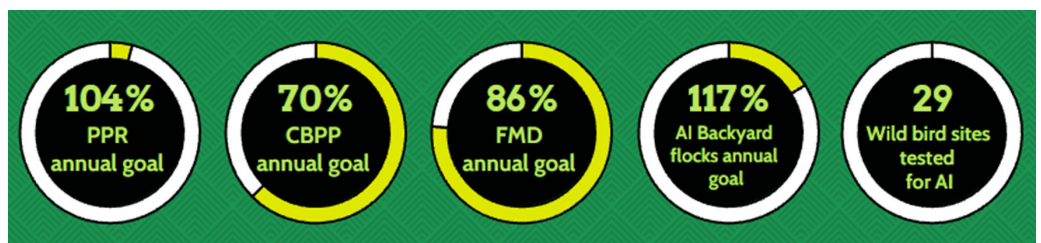
Foot and mouth disease (FMD) update

Twenty-nine locations have been confirmed positive now. Although two are feedlots, with the cattle destined for slaughter, the remaining locations are communal herds located in two clusters namely Mtubatuba and Nongoma. The situation is reportedly stable and the size of the Disease Management Area was thus reduced ([more info](#)).

Gauteng Province may be relatively far from these outbreaks, but the province boasts at least 13 livestock auctions, which may attract livestock traders from anyway in search of better market options. GVS encourages all veterinary, farming and auction personnel to be vigilant for possible FMD incursions, while maintaining routine active surveillance for FMD in the province.

Cumulative Surveillance Summary 2021

Active surveillance for contagious bovine pleuro-pneumonia (CBPP), peste des petits ruminants (PPR), foot and mouth disease (FMD), and avian influenza (AI) is done monthly or quarterly (FMD) in Gauteng. All suspected cases are investigated.

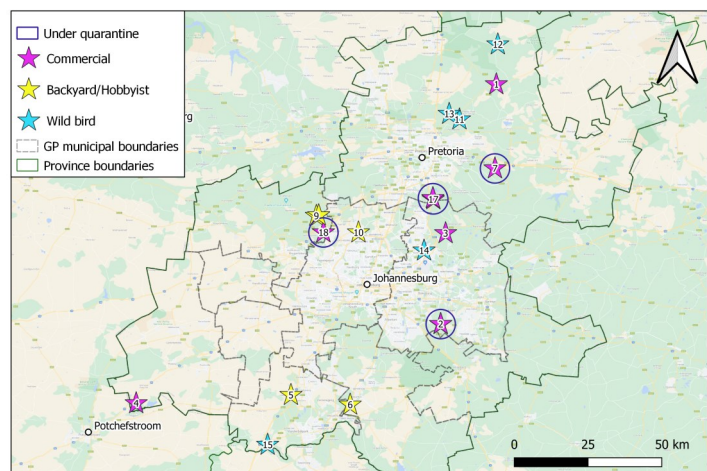


2021 African swine fever (ASF) outbreaks updated 8 October 2021

Created by Epidemiology, Gauteng Vet Services, using QGIS (<http://qgis.osgeo.org>)

Outbreaks are labelled by the sequence in which they were reported. Some may be superimposed due to close proximity.

Fig 3: Distribution of current ASF outbreaks.



Highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) H5 Outbreaks, updated 8 October 2021

Created by Epidemiology, Gauteng Vet Services, using QGIS (<http://qgis.osgeo.org>)

Outbreaks are labelled by the sequence in which they were reported. Some are superimposed due to close proximity.

Fig 4: Distribution of current HPAI H5 outbreaks.

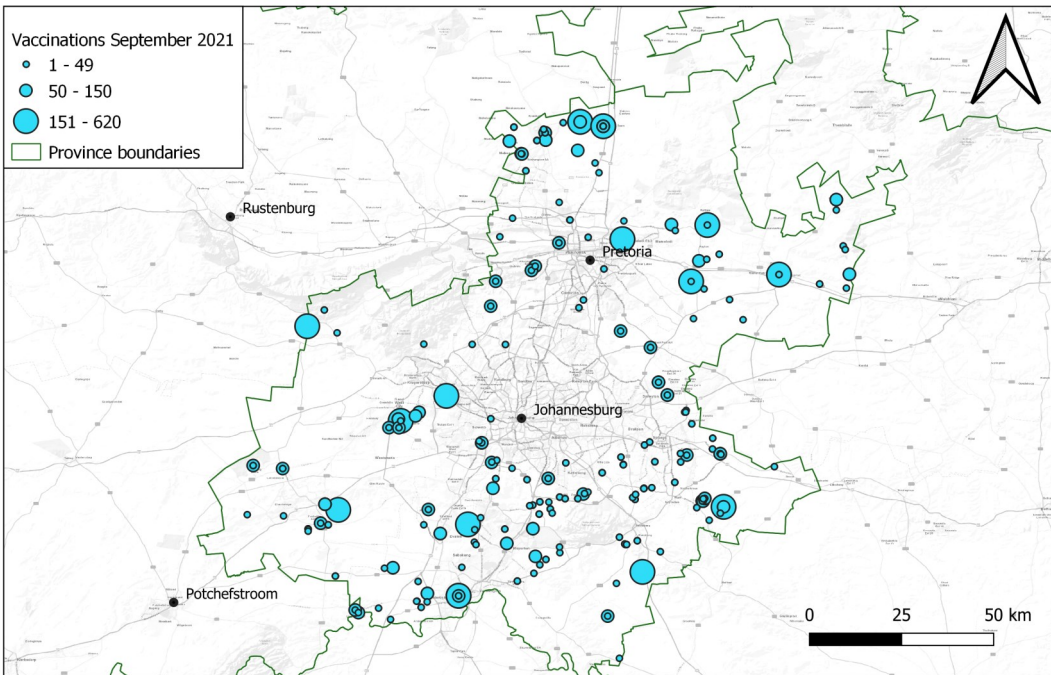
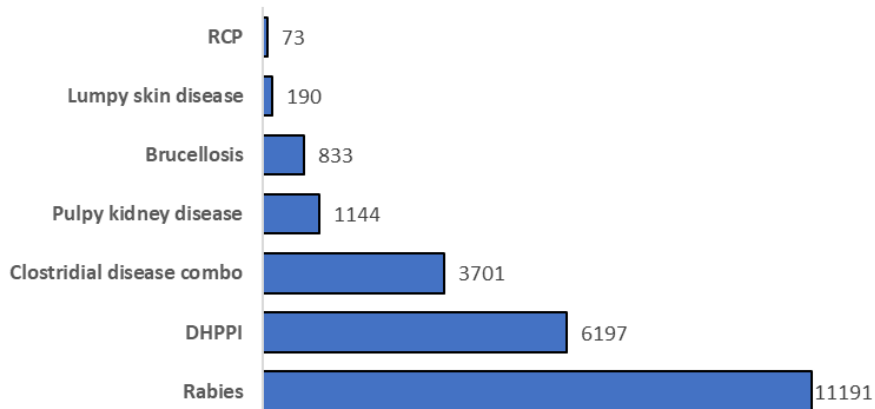


Animal disease vaccination activities

GVS primary animal health and regulatory officials administer vaccinations to animals in the public sector on a daily basis.

The total number vaccines administered for September was **23 329**, an increase of 7 343 from last month. A total of 11 191 rabies vaccinations were given to pets in September through this services.

Vaccinations by GVS, September 2021



RCP: Feline rhinotracheitis, calici & panleukopaenia virus.
DHPPI: Canine distemper, infectious hepatitis, parvo & parainfluenza virus.
Clostridial disease combo: Anthrax, botulism & black quarter.
 (data may change and numbers are only estimates)



Fig 5: Cats were included in the rabies vaccination campaigns during September.
 Photo by Adri Grobler

Vaccination Reports by GVS, September 2021

Created by Epidemiology, Gauteng Vet Services Using QGIS (<http://qgis.osgeo.org>)

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