Outbreaks of avian influenza have been relatively infrequent in 2015, barring a number of occurrences early in January which were remnants of the 2014 H5N2 events (see figure 1). In July 2015, however, we have had a sudden sharp increase in outbreaks in the ostrich industry as well as an outbreak on three duck farms in the Boland (data not included in the temporal graphics but likely to be H6 avian influenza).

The ostrich events have been on the increase in general since the lull in influenza activity in 2013 through late 2014. Since then, however, two spikes in incidence have occurred, in late 2014/early 2015 and again in mid-2015. The last spike has also interestingly had six H6 positive ostrich farms and another three H6 duck farms linked to it. Prior to this, the last time we saw H6 AI in the province was in early 2013, more than two years ago.

H5N2 has dominated the AI landscape since the highly pathogenic avian influenza events of 2011 (H5 subtypes are shown in yellow in figure 2). 2015 is no exception. We have confirmed low pathogenic avian influenza in a cluster of four farms near Calitzdorp and, since April, a further four farms have been detected as H5N2 positive.

Spatially, incursions have been limited to three major locations (see figure 3): H6 in the Boland (three duck farms and one ostrich farm); H5N2 near Swellendam in the Southern Cape and a mixture of H5N2 and H6 in Calitzdorp and Oudtshoorn. This spatial distribution is not unusual given the distribution of our ostrich and poultry farms.

With the recent publication of the European Commission implementing regulation (EU) 2015/1349 on 3 August 2015, the export of fresh ratite meat to the EU is imminent. The ostrich industry needs to remain cognisant of the amount of avian influenza virus in the environment. This is particularly true for low pathogenic H5 subtypes since these have the potential to mutate to their highly pathogenic form, which would again put the export of fresh ratite meat in jeopardy. Good biosecurity principles need to be implemented to prevent the spread of infection off infected farms.
Figure 4: Surveillance and disease map of the Western Cape for July 2015.

Legend (New outbreaks in bold and count shown, follow up transparent):
- Al Low Pathogenic H5 (4)
- Al Low Pathogenic Other (7)
- Camphydiasis (1)
- IBR (1)
- Johne's Disease (4)
- Rabies (2)
- Sarcocystis Mange (4)
- Sheep Scab (4)
- Swine Erysipelas (2)
- Red Spot Disease (1)
- Salmonella enteritidis (1)
- UBAO surveillance incidents (p=96)
- CAPS surveillance incidents (p=96)
- Other notified incidents (n=921)
- Routine Vaccination Events - Al diseases (p=483)

Surveillance & Disease - July 2015

Map produced by the Epidemiology Section
Western Cape Department of Agriculture
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA
Outbreak events

- A small spotted cat (*Felis negripes*) near Piketberg and a bat-eared fox near Riebeeck-Kasteel tested positive for rabies after they were killed by farm workers. Both animals showed abnormal behaviour, including no fear of humans, with the cat repeatedly trying to attack a farm worker and the fox entering a building.

- Sheep farms near Riversdale, Rivieronsend and Darling were confirmed positive for Johne’s disease after several emaciated sheep were observed in the flock.

- *Salmonella enteritidis* was cultured from environmental swabs on a broiler farm near Malmesbury. No clinical signs of disease was observed in the chickens.

- A calf near Varnhynsdorp showed severe conjunctivitis, haemorrhagic diarrhoea, and nasal discharge due to a case of infectious bovine rhinotracheitis.

- Outbreaks of sheep scab were detected in flocks near Vredendal, Mossel Bay and Moorreesburg.

- Pigs showing signs of diamond skin disease caused by *Erysipelothrix rhusiopathiae* were detected during meat inspection in abattoirs near Mossel Bay and Malmesbury. Both affected carcasses were condemned.

- Epizootic ulcerative syndrome was diagnosed using PCR in barehead gobies in the Palmiet River estuary. This is the second occurrence of EUS in the Palmiet River system since it was first discovered in the Western Cape in 2010.

- *Chlamydophila abortus* was identified as the cause of stillborn lambs near Prince Albert.

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**Oom Flip Kemp retires**

Oom Flip Kemp, our Animal Health Technician for many years in Uniondale retired during July. We want to thank him for many years’ service. He received recognition from the SA AHT society as well - the photo shows Mr Marius Vrey (left) presenting Oom Flip with his trophy.

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**Disclaimer:** This report is published on a monthly basis for the purpose of providing up-to-date information regarding epidemiology of animal diseases in the Western Cape Province. Much of the information is therefore preliminary and should not be cited/utilised for publication.