Status of Rabies and Control Strategies

in South Africa

Compiled by the Directorate: Animal Health

Rabies Webinar: September 2020

agriculture, land reform
& rural development

Department:
Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

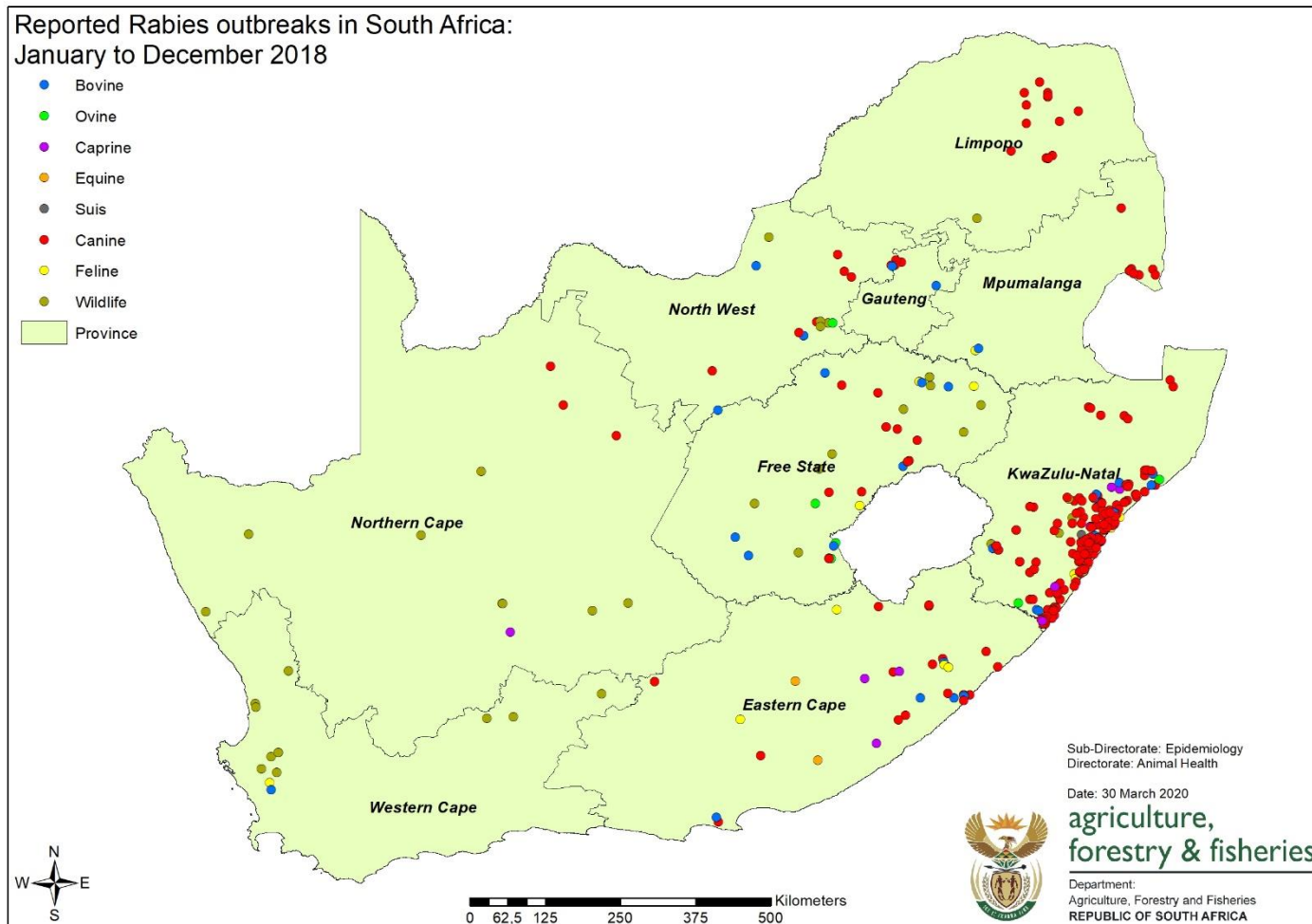NDP 2030

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- What is Rabies

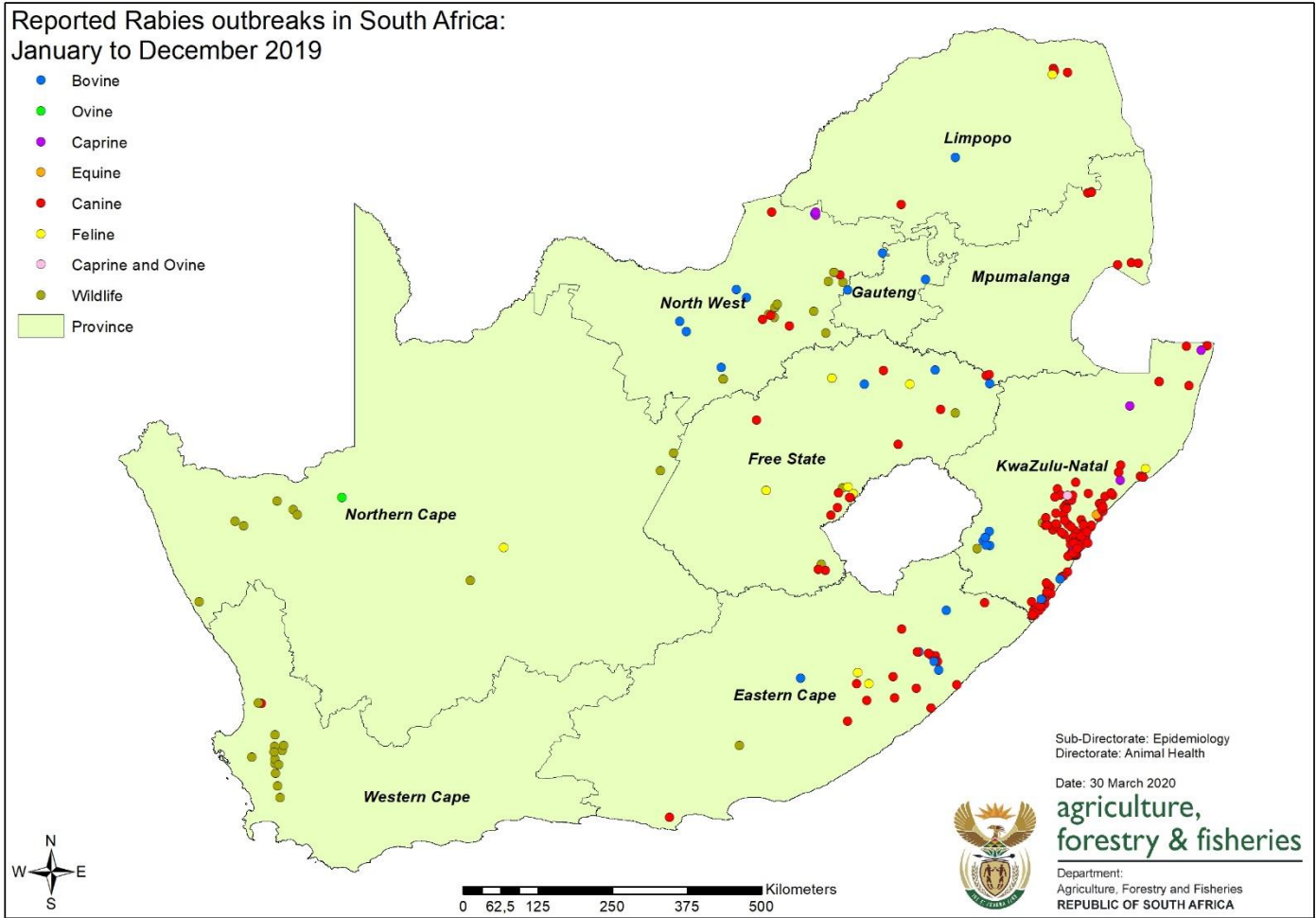- Status of Rabies

- Control strategies

What is Rabies

- Rabies is a viral disease that affects the central nervous system of mammals, including humans.
- The virus is particularly present in the saliva and brain of infected animals.
- It is transmitted via the saliva of an infected animal, most often a dog.
- The incubation period varies from several days to several months.
- Once symptoms are present, the disease is fatal for both animals and humans
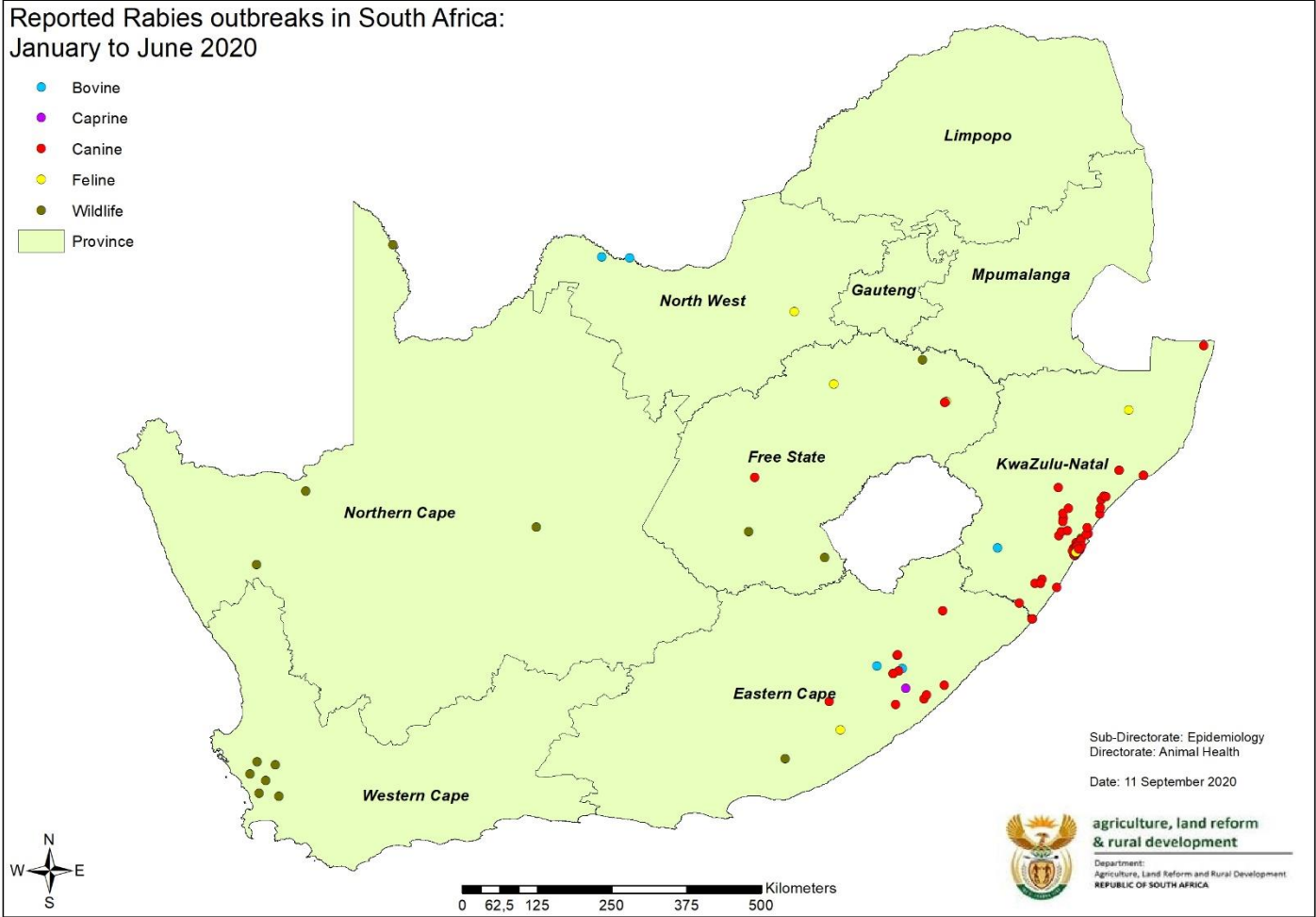
Disease Situation

Reported Rabies outbreaks in South Africa:
January to December 2018

Disease Situation

Reported Rabies outbreaks in South Africa:
January to December 2019

Disease Situation

Reported Rabies outbreaks in South Africa: January to June 2020

Control Strategy

Rabies is a **Controlled Disease** according to the Animal Diseases Act

Owners must vaccinate their dogs every three years – in high risk areas annual vaccination is recommended
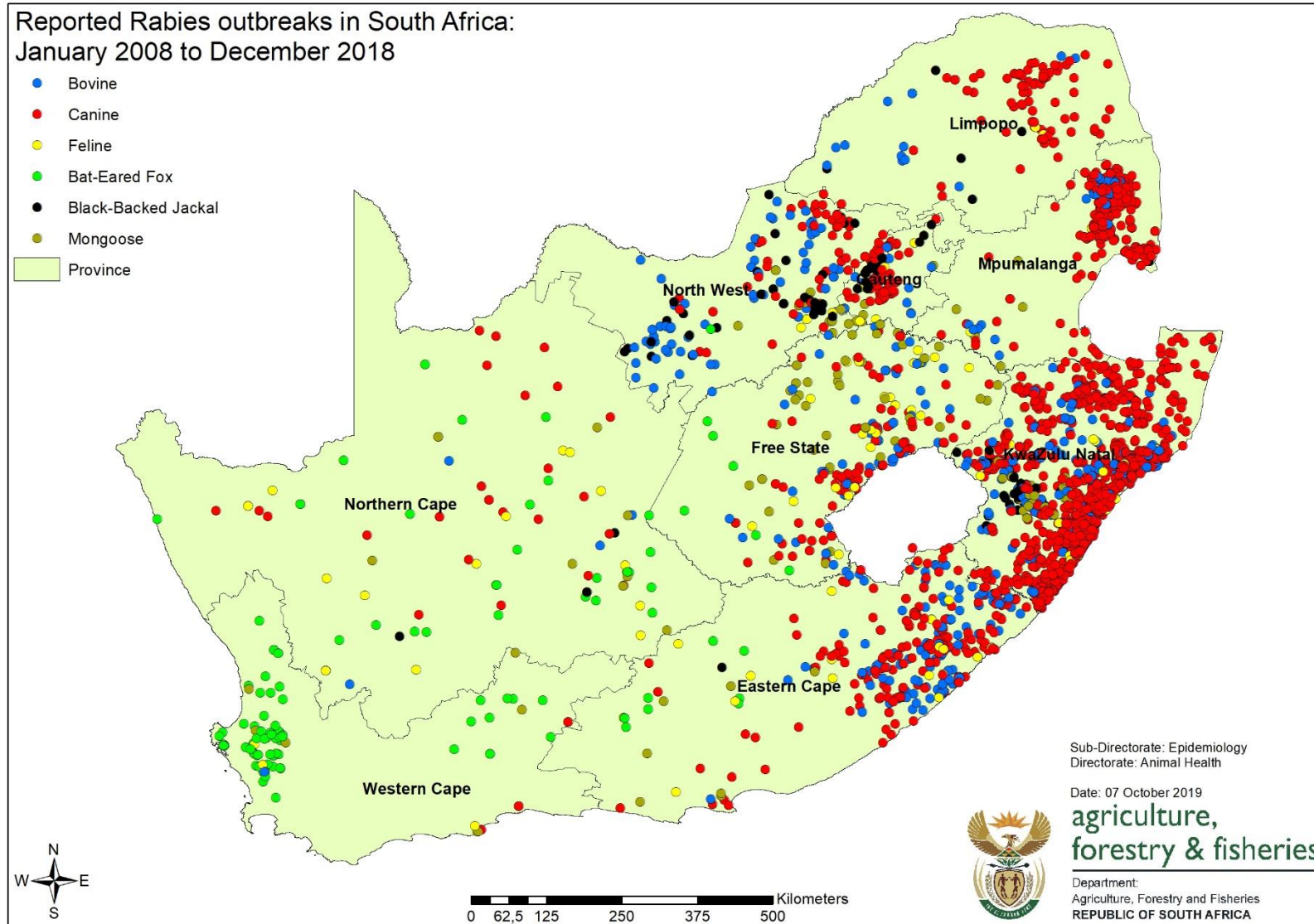
Control Strategy

There are three existing solutions to avoid human cases of rabies:

- Mass vaccination of dogs in infected areas;

- Preventative vaccination for humans (reserved);

- Administration of anti-rabies serum following a bite by a dog suspected to be infected.

Control Strategy

- Mass vaccination of dogs is the method of choice, **as this is the only real way to interrupt the disease's infectious cycle between animals and humans**.

- It is estimated that by vaccinating 70% of the dogs where infection is still rife, rabies could be eradicated in dogs and the number of human cases would rapidly drop to almost zero.
  - Control of stray dogs.
  - Confinement of dogs

- To achieve this South Africa has set up a Rabies Vaccine Bank, but this still needs more funding to make it sustainable.

Control Strategy

Reported Rabies outbreaks in South Africa: January 2008 to December 2018

Control Strategy

#ZeroBy30

- Around 99% of human cases of rabies are due to bites from infected dogs. Controlling and eradicating rabies therefore means combatting it at its animal source

- WHO-OIE-FAO targets to eradicate dog mediated human rabies cases by 2030

Acknowledgements

- The Veterinary Profession

- Industry role players

Thank you