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MEDIA RELEASE

AVIAN INFLUENZA OUTBREAKS ON COMMERCIAL CHICKEN FARMS IN GAUTENG AND NORTH WEST PROVINCES

22 APRIL 2021

The Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development on the 13th of April 2021 reported an outbreak of a H5 avian influenza on a commercial chicken farm in Ekurhuleni, Gauteng. The avian influenza strain was subsequently confirmed to be highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) H5N1. Further genetic evaluation confirmed that it is a Clade 2.3.4.4 virus that groups closely with the currently circulating virus strains in wild birds in Europe. No human infection due to these circulating strains had been reported in Europe and thus the zoonotic risk to people is very low, the consumer has no reason to be concerned. The entire farm was culled (approximately 270 000 birds) and approval was obtained for burial at a nearby dumping site under controlled conditions and under state veterinary supervision.

On 19 April 2021 a further two commercial chicken properties tested positive for H5 on PCR. One is a commercial chicken-layer farm in City of Tshwane, Gauteng. The other is a commercial chicken parent breeder farm in J.B Marks Local Municipality in North West Province. Both these farms have been quarantined and control measures are being implemented.

Everyone is urged to treat any increase in mortalities (deaths) of poultry and other bird species as potential avian influenza until proven otherwise. All increases in mortality rates must be reported to the responsible state veterinarian of the area immediately.

Furthermore, everyone keeping poultry and other bird species should ensure that their biosecurity and biosafety measures are refined and of the highest standard possible.

All poultry farmers as well as those with birds kept for a hobby or zoo purposes are encouraged to take the following biosecurity measures that are recommended:

- Keep birds away from areas that are visited by wild birds;
- Keep control over the access of poultry houses by people and equipment;
- Do not provide water and food in a way that may attract wild birds. Rather feed your own birds under cover or inside a confined structure;
- Maintain proper disinfection of the property, poultry houses and equipment;
- Avoid the introduction of birds of unknown disease status into your flock(s);
- Report illness and deaths of birds to your responsible state or private veterinarian;
- Practice appropriate disposal of manure and dead birds.

One of the three affected facilities is a registered compartment for export. In agreement with international trade recommendations, Namibia and Botswana have only banned poultry and poultry raw products from this affected compartment. Both countries therefore still allow the export of poultry and poultry raw



products from registered compartments within South Africa that comply with the monthly surveillance requirements and are on the NAI free compartment list compiled by the Directorate: Animal Health. Lesotho has banned the importation of poultry and poultry products from Gauteng Province.

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Issued by the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development Reform:

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Nokuthukiswa Kwezindawo Zasemakhaya Ndzawulo ya Vurimi, Antswiso wa Misava na Nhluvukiso wa Matikoxikaya Litiko
Letekulima, Tingucuko Kutemhlaba NekuTufukiswa Kwetindzawo Tasemaphandleni UmNyango wezokuLima, ukuBuyiselwa kweNarha
nokuThuthukiswa kweNdawo zemaKhaya Kgoro ya Temo, Peakanyoleswa ya Naga le Tlhabollo ya Dinaga- magae Lefapha la
Temothuo, Kabobotjha ya Naha le Tlhabollo ya Dibaka tsa Mahae Lefapha la Temothuo, PusetsoDinaga le Tlhabollo ya Metsemagae
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