

# Report on the 2013 African Horse Sickness outbreaks: update no 3

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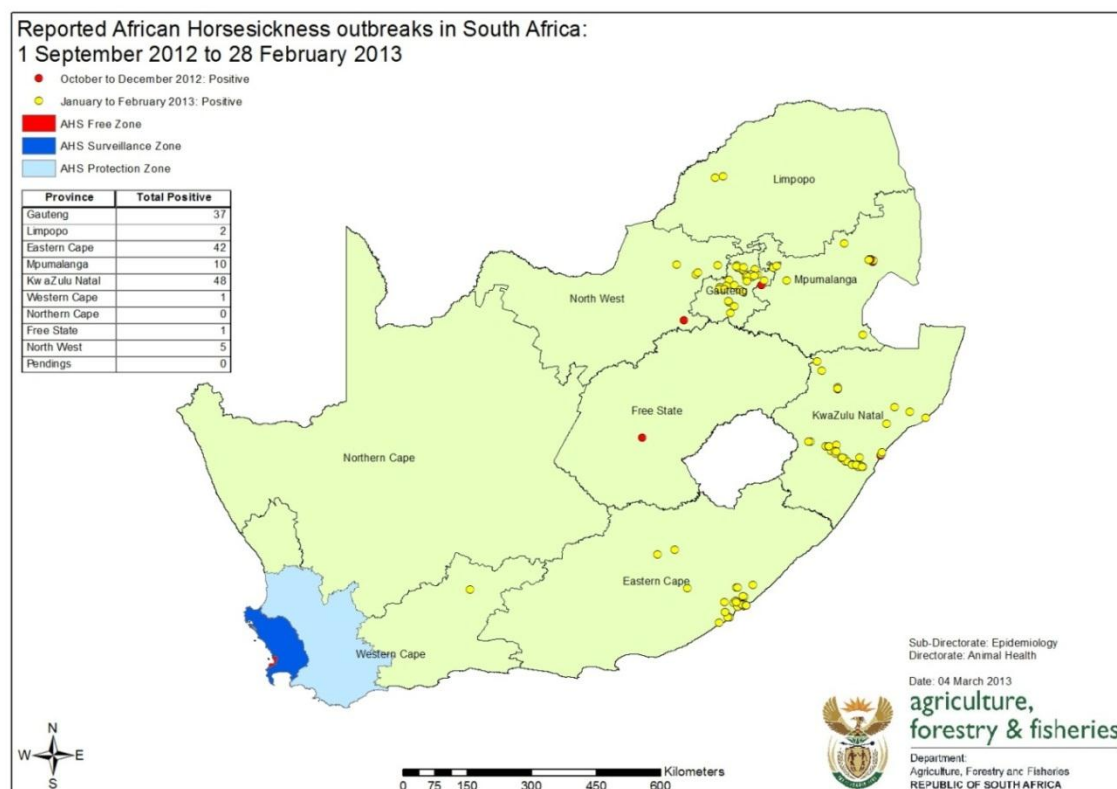
## Reported outbreaks

African Horse Sickness outbreaks are recorded from 1 September to 31 August of each year. Forty two (42) African Horse Sickness (AHS) outbreaks were reported since the start of the 2013 AHS cycle on 1 September 2012 as can be seen in Table 1.

**Table 1: Reported African Horse Sickness outbreaks: 1 September 2012 to 28 February 2013.**

Province	Outbreaks
Eastern Cape Province	42
Gauteng	37
Free State	1
Limpopo	2
KZN	48
Mpumalanga	10
North West Province	5
Northern Cape Province	0
Western Cape Province	1
<b>TOTAL (1 September 2012 to 28 February 2013)</b>	<b>146</b>

The distribution of the reported outbreaks is illustrated in Figure 1. The first outbreaks started in North West Province, Mpumalanga, Gauteng, KZN and the Free State during the October 2012 to December 2012 period with spread of disease to the Eastern Cape Province and the eastern portion of the Western Cape Province during January to February 2013. The reported outbreaks in the KZN midlands follow the route of the N3 highway. The reason is unknown but one can speculate that more equine locations are situated along the main routes and/ or reporting of outbreaks is more convenient if the location is closer to main routes. It is also possible that the main route contributes to the distribution of disease as horses in the incubation phase or early stage of disease might be moved along the route.



**Figure 1: Reported AHS Sickness outbreaks: 1 September 2012 to 28 February 2013**

## Serotypes detected in the current season

Only a few reports on serotypes were received and serotype 2, 4 and 6 were detected in samples submitted in the current season as can be seen in Figure 2. The serotypes were determined by RT-PCR at the Equine Research Centre, University of Pretoria (Test not DAFF approved).

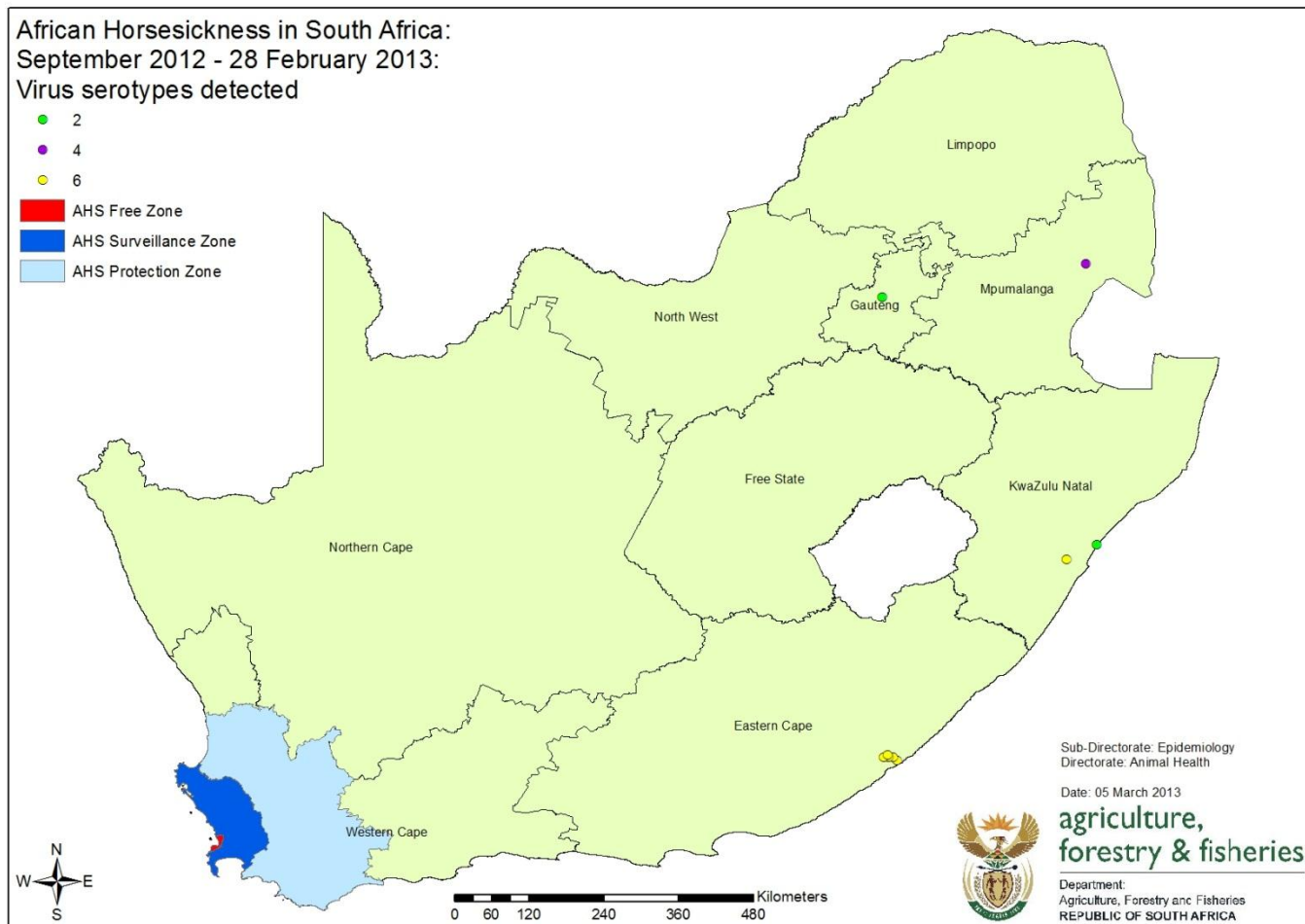


Figure 2: AHS virus serotypes detected in the 1 September 2012 to 28 February 2013 period

## Temporal comparison of the number of reported outbreaks in 2011, 2012 and 2013 (until mid-March 2013)

The outbreaks reported in the 2013 season reached a peak in January with a steady decline in the February to mid-March period. The 2011 and 2012 seasons reached a peak only in March with a sharp decline in the April and May period as illustrated in Figure 3.

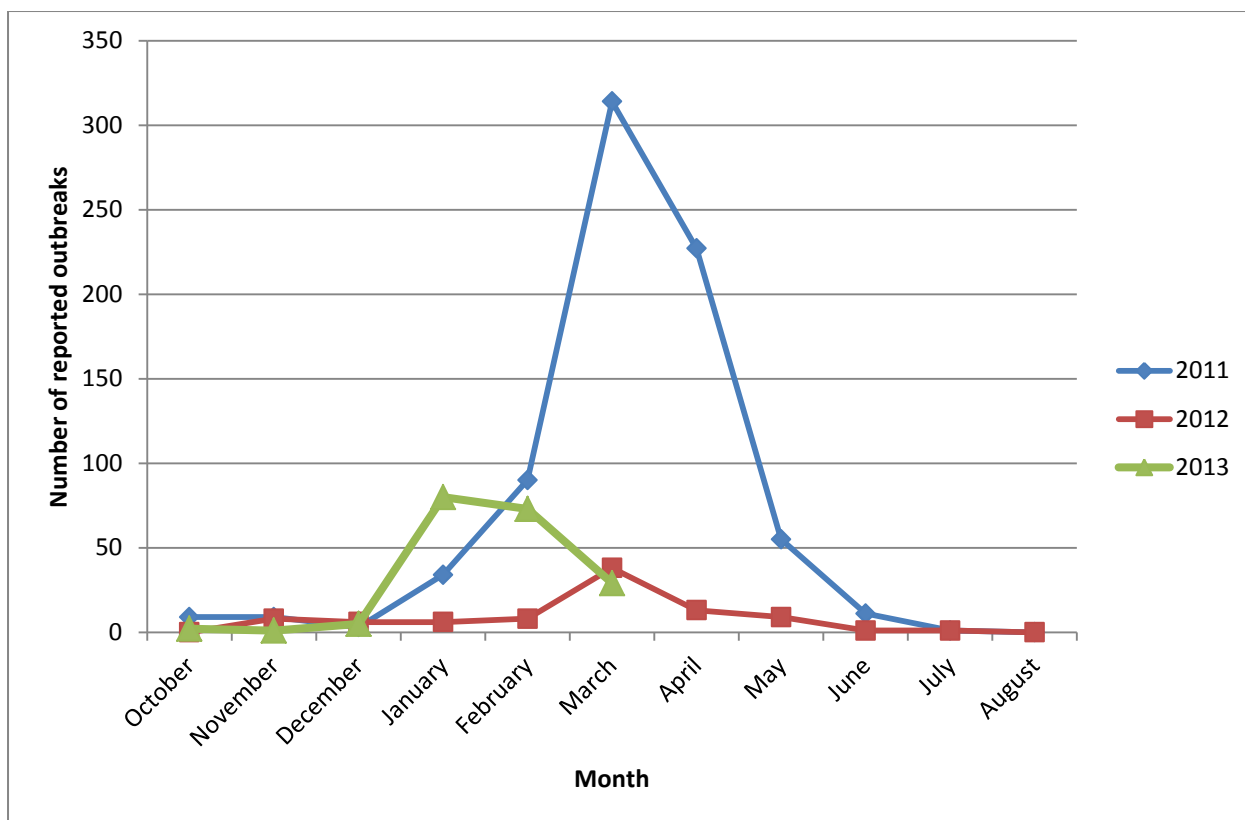


Figure 3: Comparison of the number of reported outbreaks in 2011, 2012 and up to mid-March 2013

## Precautions to limit outbreaks

Owners are encouraged to vaccinate their animals annually to limit the impact of the disease. All horses in RSA (except in the AHS free and surveillance zones in the Western Cape Province) must be vaccinated annually using a registered vaccine at the cost of the owner. The African Horse Sickness Vaccine from Onderstepoort Biological Products (Reg No, G116, Act 36 of 1947) is currently the only registered vaccine. It is important administer the vaccine **before** the start of AHS outbreaks.

It is advisable to stable horses at least two hours before sunset and keep them stabled for at least two hours after sunrise. This is the time period when the *Culicoides* midges are most active and known to be feeding. As *Culicoides* midges also colonize around stagnant water sources, all efforts should be made to prevent such pooling of water and to move animals away from these sources.

To prevent the introduction of the AHS virus into the AHS free zone which is part of the AHS controlled area of the WCP; all movements of horses to the AHS controlled areas area are subject to State Veterinary movement control (permit). The local State Veterinarian will advise on the AHS status of the relevant areas.

## Reporting of outbreaks

African horse sickness is a controlled animal disease in terms of the Animal Diseases Act, 1984 (Act 35 of 1984). Reporting of AHS outbreaks to State Veterinary Services is compulsory according to the Animal Disease Act, 1984 (Act 35 of 1984). Please contact the relevant Provincial Director, Veterinary Services, if the contact details of the State Veterinarian are unknown.

<http://www.daff.gov.za/vetweb/Contacts/Contact%20list%20Provincial%20Directors.htm>.