



2026

DISEASE REPORT

June

Compiled by:
DR. Danie Odendaal

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

June
2026

Foot-and-mouth disease remained a national concern during June, with further outbreaks reported in the Eastern Cape, southern Free State and Northern Cape. Although this continued to dominate disease discussions, several unusual seasonal disease trends were also reported.

Blue tick numbers remained unexpectedly high well into winter, resulting in continued reports of African redwater, Asiatic redwater, anaplasmosis and heartwater in endemic areas.

The unusually late survival of adult female ticks is expected to increase spring larval numbers, making strategic spring tick control particularly important. If this early season tick population is not effectively contained, it will present a major challenge later in the season.

CONTINUE ON NEXT PAGE



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY – **CONTINUED**

Pneumonia remained one of the most important disease challenges in both sheep and cattle. Continued fluctuations in temperature and winter weather conditions are expected to maintain disease pressure throughout July.

In cattle, veterinarians reported increasing numbers of abortions requiring investigation, together with an unusually high number of difficult calvings. In sheep, internal parasites remained the leading disease problem, while increasing reports of coccidiosis and sheep abscesses highlighted the importance of accurate diagnosis and long-term disease prevention.

This month's report focuses on abortion investigations, difficult calvings, sheep abscesses and strategic spring tick planning.



TOP 10 BEEF DISEASES

		Previous Month May 2026		Current Month June 2026	
Rank	Disease	Reports	Severity (3)	Reports	Severity (3)
1	Blue ticks	32	2,5	35	▼2,3
2	Foot-and-mouth disease	34	2,4	35	▼2,3
3	Lung infection	13	2,1	24	▲2,2
4	Lumpy skin disease	15	1,8	20	▲2,2
5	Ringworms	14	1,9	18	▲2,0
6	Anaplasmosis	15	1,9	21	1,9
7	Lameness / foot problems	12	2,3	22	▼1,8
8	African redwater	16	1,7	20	1,7
9	Dystocia (difficult birth)	19	1,7	32	1,7
10	Vaginal (cervical) prolapse	9	1,3	18	▲1,5

TOP 10 SHEEP DISEASES

		Previous Month May 2026		Current Month June 2026	
Rank	Disease	Reports	Severity (3)	Reports	Severity (3)
1	Resistant round worms	10	2,1	9	▲2,6
2	Roundworms in general	18	2,3	17	▲2,5
3	Coccidiosis	12	2,3	13	2,3
4	Lameness/foot problems	10	2,4	9	▼2,2
5	Orf	14	2,0	9	▲2,2
6	Wireworm	31	2,2	34	2,2
7	Energy deficiency	3	2,0	9	2,0
8	Lung infection	12	2,4	15	▼1,9
9	Cryptosporidiosis	7	1,9	9	1,9
10	Pulpy kidney	8	2,1	10	▼1,5



June
2026

BEEF DISEASES

01 ABORTIONS

02 DIFFICULT CALVINGS

SHEEP DISEASES

01 INTERNAL PARASITES &
COCCIDIOSIS

02 SHEEP ABSCESSSES

ABORTIONS

PROVINCE	MP	Gauteng	Limpopo	NW	Free State	KZN	EC	WC	NC
AVERAGE	2.0 (7)	2.2 (5)	1.0 (1)		2.1 (7)	2.3 (3)	2.5 (2)	1.9 (8)	
BEEF	1.6 (5)	2.5 (2)	1.0 (1)		2.3 (4)	2.0 (2)	2.0 (1)	2.0 (2)	
DAIRY						3.0 (1)	3.0 (1)	1.8 (4)	
SHEEP	3.0 (1)	2.0 (1)			2.0 (3)			2.0 (1)	
GOAT	3.0 (1)	2.0 (2)						2.0 (1)	

The number represent level of importance on a scale of 0–3, and the number in brackets, is the number of veterinarians that reported this disease.

Abortions become increasingly important as beef herds approach the spring calving season. An abortion rate below 2% is generally regarded as normal. Once abortion rates increase above 2%, particularly towards 5%, further veterinary investigation becomes essential.

Brucellosis should always be excluded first, followed by reproductive diseases such as trichomoniasis. Poor nutrition, moldy hay and any disease that causes a fever, can also contribute to abortions.

Accurate record keeping remains one of the most important management tools. Unless every abortion is recorded, developing disease problems often remain unnoticed until significant production losses have occurred.

FARMER ACTION

Monitor and record every abortion. If abortion rates exceed 2%, consult your veterinarian to investigate the underlying cause before the next breeding season.



DIFFICULT CALVINGS

PROVINCE	MP	Gauteng	Limpopo	NW	Free State	KZN	EC	WC	NC
AVERAGE	1.7 (6)	1.0 (4)	1.0 (2)	1.8 (5)	1.9 (14)	1.5 (4)	1.0 (3)	1.6 (8)	
BEEF	1.8 (5)	1.0 (3)	1.0 (2)	2.0 (4)	1.9 (11)	1.7 (3)	1.0 (2)	1.7 (3)	
DAIRY						1.0 (1)	1.0 (1)	1.7 (3)	
SHEEP	1.0 (1)			1.0 (1)	2.0 (3)			1.5 (2)	
GOAT		1.0 (1)							

The number represent level of importance on a scale of 0–3, and the number in brackets, is the number of veterinarians that reported this disease.

Veterinarians reported an unusually high number of difficult calvings during June.

Many cases were associated with oversized calves following excellent grazing conditions and nutrition during late pregnancy. Difficult calvings remain one of the most common reasons producers require emergency veterinary assistance and frequently result in calf losses, cow injuries and reduced future fertility.

Careful planning before the breeding season remains the most effective preventative strategy.

FARMER ACTION

Review difficult calving records with your veterinarian.

Discuss bull selection, cow nutrition and staff training before the next breeding season so that difficult births are recognised early and assistance can be provided before complications develop.



INTERNAL PARASITES & COCCIDIOSIS

PROVINCE	MP	Gauteng	Limpopo	NW	Free State	KZN	EC	WC	NC
AVERAGE	3.0 (1)	2.0 (3)			2.3 (7)		2.0 (2)	1.8 (6)	
BEEF					2.0 (1)				
DAIRY								1.0 (1)	
SHEEP	3.0 (1)	2.0 (1)			2.4 (5)		2.0 (2)	2.3 (4)	
GOAT		2.0 (2)			2.0 (1)			1.0 (1)	
The number represent level of importance on a scale of 0-3, and the number in brackets, is the number of veterinarians that reported this disease.									

Although wireworm remained important well into winter, increasing reports of brown stomach worm, bankrupt worm, conical fluke and coccidiosis were also received.

Unlike wireworm, which primarily causes anaemia, many of these parasites interfere with digestion and commonly result in diarrhoea, dirty breeches, rapid weight loss and poor ewe condition during lambing.

Because natural immunity against internal parasites declines around lambing, parasite burdens can increase rapidly during this period.

FARMER ACTION

Do not assume all diarrhoea is caused by the same parasite.

Consult your veterinarian regarding faecal examinations to identify the parasite involved before deciding on treatment.



SHEEP ABSCESSSES

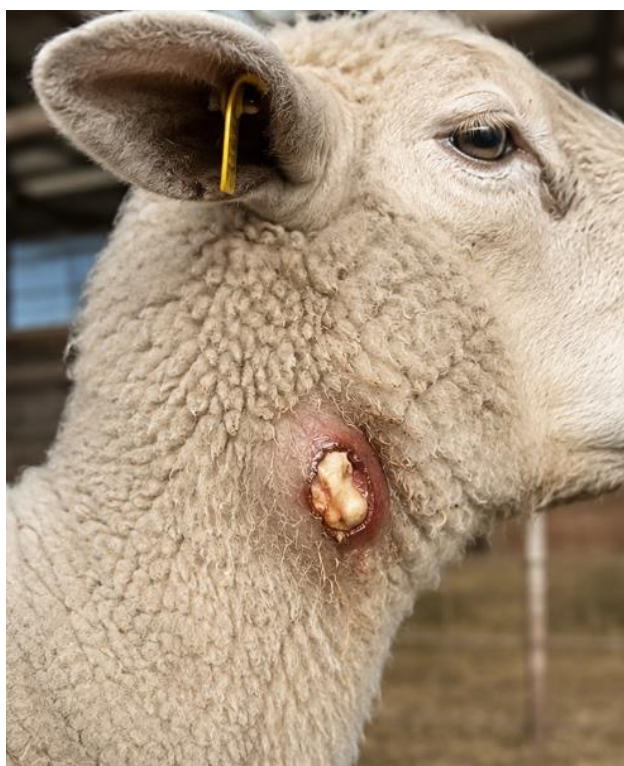
PROVINCE	MP	Gauteng	Limpopo	NW	Free State	KZN	EC	WC	NC
AVERAGE	2.0 (6)	1.7 (7)	2.0 (1)	3.0 (2)	1.7 (7)	2.0 (1)	2.3 (3)	1.3 (3)	
BEEF	1.5 (4)	1.5 (2)		3.0 (1)	1.6 (5)	2.0 (1)	2.0 (1)	2.0 (1)	
DAIRY							2.0 (1)	1.0 (1)	
SHEEP	3.0 (1)	2.0 (1)		3.0 (1)	2.0 (2)		3.0 (1)	1.0 (1)	
GOAT	3.0 (1)	1.8 (4)	2.0 (1)						

The number represent level of importance on a scale of 0–3, and the number in brackets, is the number of veterinarians that reported this disease.

Abscesses are commonly seen in sheep during winter but are not always caused by the same disease. Simple abscesses usually develop after skin wounds caused by grass seeds, thorns or splinters become infected with environmental bacteria.

These should be distinguished from caseous lymphadenitis caused by *Corynebacterium pseudotuberculosis*. This contagious disease spreads through the lymphatic system, produces abscesses in lymph nodes and internal organs, and is readily transmitted during shearing or when abscesses rupture.

Control requires a structured vaccination programme together with long-term flock management.



SHEEP ABSCESSSES – CONTINUED

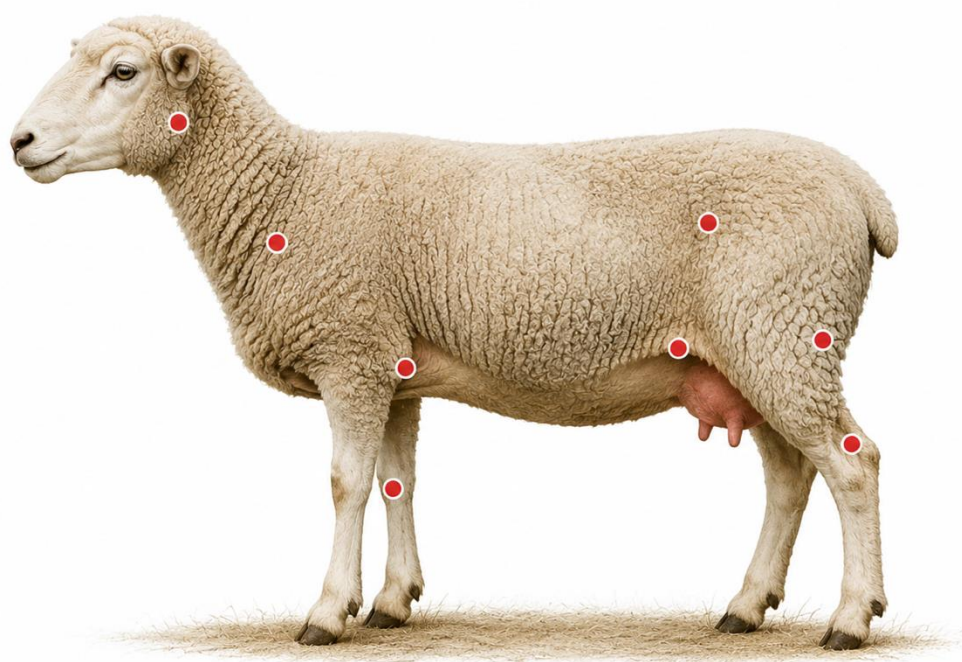
FARMER ACTION

Discuss recurring abscesses with your veterinarian. Correct diagnosis is essential because treatment and long-term control differ completely between simple wound abscesses and caseous lymphadenitis.

Most commonly seen in the lymph nodes under the ear and by the shoulder.

LYMPH NODE LOCATIONS IN SHEEP

Common sites where abscesses may occur (e.g. caseous lymphadenitis)



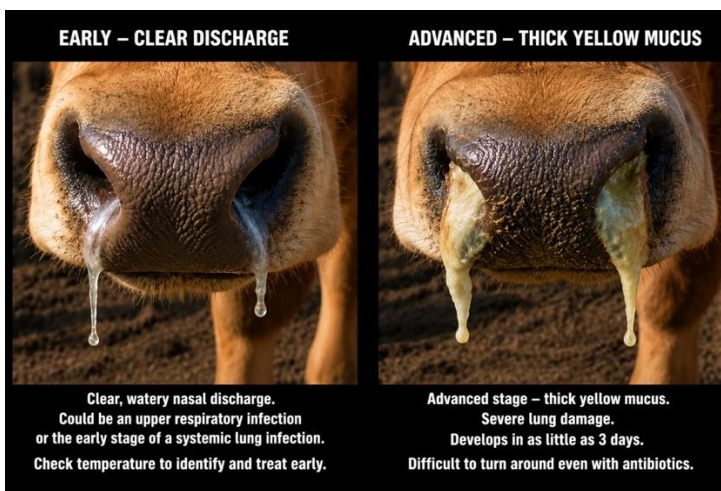
HOW CASEOUS LYMPHADENITIS SPREADS



DISEASE OUTLOOK

We end off with an outlook for July 2026.

The onset of colder winter conditions is expected to reduce both internal and external parasite burdens across most of South Africa. As tick activity declines, reports of tick-borne and insect-borne diseases should also decrease.



Pneumonia is expected to remain one of the most important disease challenges in both sheep and cattle because of continued fluctuations in winter weather conditions. Early recognition and prompt treatment remain essential to minimise losses.

Producers are encouraged to continue working closely with their veterinarians on both disease reporting and structured vaccination planning.

Ongoing research continues to demonstrate that annual vaccination programmes, combined with regular disease monitoring, provide the most effective approach to long-term disease prevention.

