



Commission on Phytosanitary Measures | 20th Session

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CPM
20

African Phytosanitary Programme in South Africa

Enhancing surveillance through digital innovations

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BACKGROUND

- Plant pest surveillance was increased in 1998 due to the threat of Larger Grain Borer, which was moving Southwards in Africa and was identified as a threat then
- At that stage there was no coordination and there was no dedicated surveillance staff
- In 2004, with restructuring of the department, a dedicated plant pest surveillance unit was formed with only **2 staff members**
- In 2006, the first officially coordinated detection surveillance programme was launched for **Fruit Flies** of economic importance
- Since then, the surveillance unit (policy and operational) has grown to **26 staff members**



OVERVIEW OF PLANT HEALTH SYSTEM IN SOUTH AFRICA

- Agriculture in SA is one of the mainstays of the country's economy
- Offers opportunities for small, large, commercial and emerging farmers
- Roughly **13.4 million hectares** were cultivated in the form of field crops in 2025
- The department is actively pursuing a strategy to increase and diversify its agricultural exports
- Exports increase job opportunities which is one of SA government strategic goals
- SA also aims to address high household-level food insecurity by increasing production



PLANT HEALTH GAPS

With an increase in global trade and travel as well as new diagnostics techniques, such as new generation sequencing, the country has faced a high number of pest detections such as:

- Oriental Fruit Fly
- Banana Bunchy Top Virus
- Tomato Leaf Miner
- Fall Army Worm
- Pepper Ringspot Virus
- Spotted Wing Drosophila
- Goss's Wilt
- Papaya Root Rot

These not only threaten **export markets, but food and job security as well**

PLANT HEALTH GAPS

Other pests threatening South Africa that are not yet present:

- Fusarium Wilt Tropical race 4
- Bacterial leaf scorch caused by *Xylella fastidiosa*
- Asian Strain of Citrus Greening
- Maize Lethal Necrosis Disease

It is therefore important that SA conducts regular surveillance to achieve the above-mentioned objectives

To ensure that surveillance is conducted in all areas under production, SA needs to ensure that:

- There is enough surveillance staff on the ground
- The surveillance staff is equipped with tools that make surveillance efficient
- Data is stored in a reliable and easily accessible platform

IMPLEMENTATION OF APP IN SOUTH AFRICA

South Africa joined in the second phase of the APP

- **9 core surveillance officials** were trained in the workshop held in SA in June 2025
- These officials further trained **80 officials** from all the **nine provinces of the country**

The training equipped them with:

- Surveillance protocols of SA's priority pests of concern
- Using the APP applications to collect field data



IMPLEMENTATION OF APP IN SOUTH AFRICA

In January 2026 work started on using APP applications

- Data for **7 pests** is being collected;

BBTV, Fruit Flies, Fusarium Wilt Tropical race 4, PSHB, Root Rot of Papaya, Citrus Greening, Bacterial leaf scorch

- Surveys are being conducted on a weekly/monthly/annual basis depending on the status of the specific pest in the country
- In January 2026, we conducted more than **2000 surveys** covering all the **7 pests** in all **9 provinces** of the country



SUSTAINABILITY OF THE PROGRAMME IN SA

- Surveillance is included in the strategic plan of the department of agriculture and will continue like that
- This ensures continuous allocation of funds, buy-in and ownership of the programme in the country
- The NPPO has allocated funds and personnel for surveillance
- The NPPO has appointed a service provider to assist on all technical issues relating to the programme



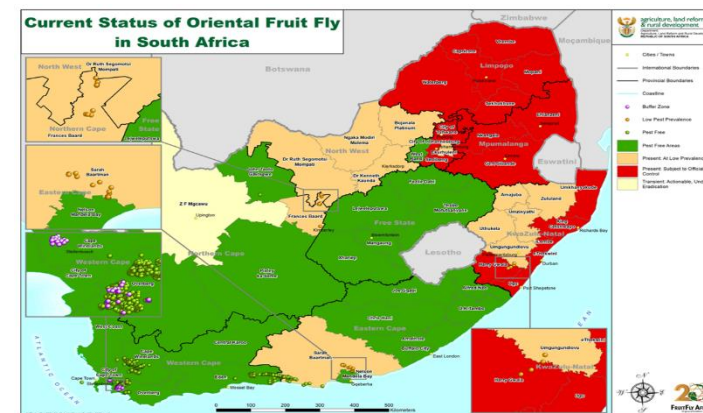
TRIUMPHS AND TRIALS

Successes:

- Onboarding of provincial officials
- Expanded surveillance network for priority pests
- Efficient data collection
- Easily accessible database
- Simplified reporting

Challenges

- Constant need of re-training on the use of the tablets



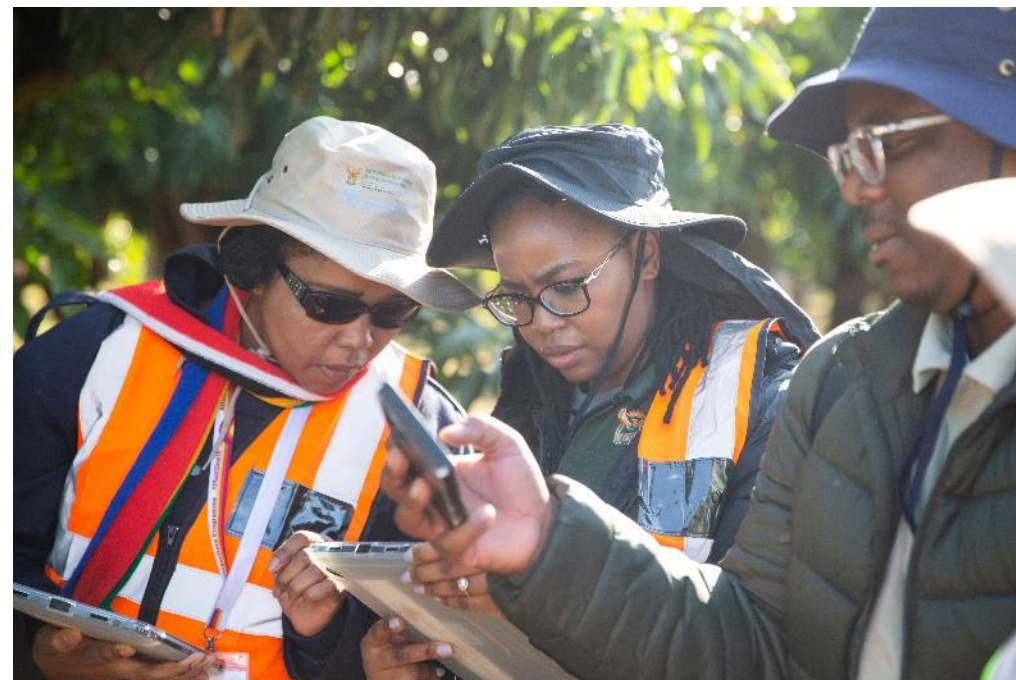
South African *Xylella fastidiosa* Surveillance Report (2025/2026)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This integrated report consolidates South Africa's national *Xylella fastidiosa* surveillance outcomes for 2025. Across all four years, 2022-2025, sampling, molecular testing, and risk-based statistical analyses confirmed that *Xylella fastidiosa* remains absent from South Africa. **This combined report integrates methodologies, sampling outputs, and diagnostic results from 2022–2025.**

NEXT STEPS

- **Training in each of the nine provinces** to expand surveillance even further
- **On-going refresher trainings** for already on-boarded officials
- **Purchasing of more tablets** for the extra officials
- Interfacing with National Biosecurity Hub for an **in-country early warning system**



CALL TO ACTION

- **More African countries to be onboarded** – the more countries conduct surveillance, the wider the surveillance network will be, because pests know no borders
- **APP to link to a regional alert system** that can serve as an early warning system for the region
- **More donor funding** to ensure sustainability and expansion of the programme



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Thank you

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