

d Brucellosis: case report and request for increased clinician awareness

In early September 2016, the NICD was alerted to a possible case of brucellosis. A 40-year-old male tested positive for IgM against *Brucella* species with a high antibody titre. In early August, the patient developed myalgia, arthralgia, headaches and extreme fatigue, even on performing ordinary household tasks, and night sweats. On visiting his GP, a number of tests were done including serology for Epstein-Barr virus, typhoid (Widal test), *Chlamydia*, cytomegalovirus, *Toxoplasma* and *Brucella* species. All were negative except for IgM antibodies to *Brucella* spp (IgG antibodies were not detected). On further questioning, the patient reported no contact with cows, horses, goats or animal products. His dogs tested negative for brucellosis. He had travelled to China in May and early June, and had eaten and drunk local food including milk.

Brucella abortus (cattle), *B. melitensis* (sheep, goats), *B. suis* (pigs) and *B. canis* (dogs) usually affect animals but human infection may occur fol-

lowing direct contact with infected animals or their aborted fetuses, or contaminated animal products such as milk and cheese.

Although brucellosis is a controlled disease through State Veterinary Services, infection with *B. abortus* is increasingly prevalent amongst South African cattle herds in South Africa (Figure 1). Brucellosis in humans typically presents with non-specific symptoms including fatigue, myalgias, arthralgias and fever. Diagnosis is usually through isolation of the organism on blood culture, although a rising titre of antibodies against *Brucella* species is highly suggestive. Treatment is with oral doxycycline and rifampicin for six weeks, with or without intramuscular daily aminoglycoside for two weeks.

Source: Division of Public Health, Surveillance and Response NICD/NHLS; Directorate Animal Health, Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries

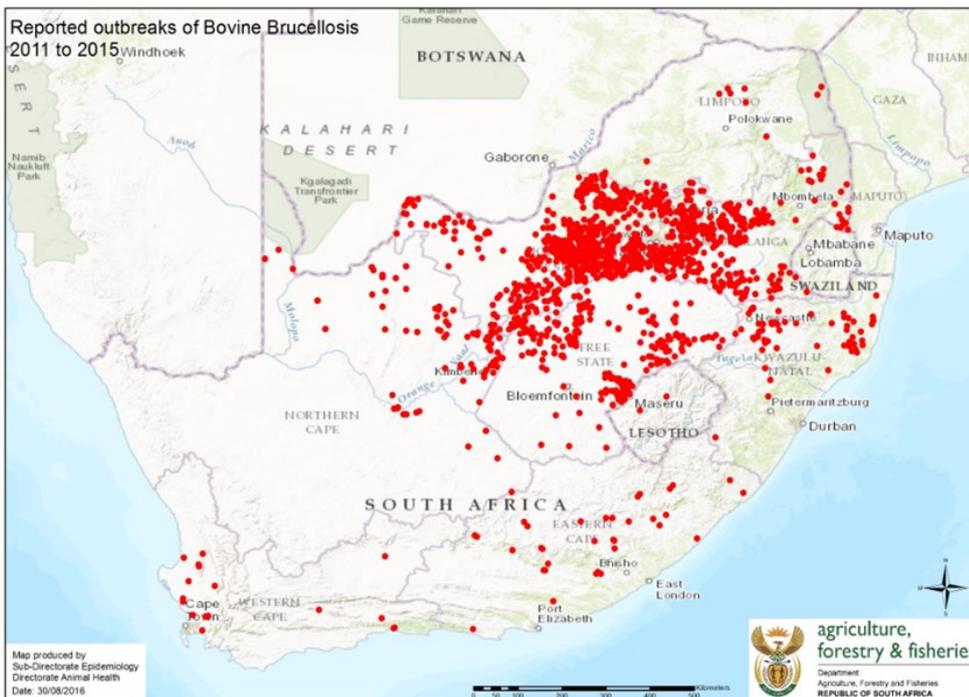


Figure 1. Outbreaks of bovine brucellosis reported to the Directorate Animal Health, Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, 2011-2016. Each red dot represents the location of an infected herd as determined by serological testing of herd animals.