

DAY 1: 15 September 2026

Preliminary Programme

Session Chair, Prof Felicity Burt

18:00

Welcome address

18:15

Opening plenary

19:00

Welcome Cocktail in Boabab

Marietjie Venter

A vaccine platform for Crimean-Congo hemorrhagic fever virus - Ali Mirazimi





DAY 2: 16 September 2026

08:00	Registration & Arrival refreshments, coffee and tea			
	Session Chair Prof Marietjie Venter			
08:30	Welcome and introduction to the research and collaboration opportunities in the KNP. Lin-Marie de Klerk, State veterinarian, Kruger National Park Mpumalanga.			
08:45	Plenaries 1.1 - Advances and challenges in the prevention of RSV - Shabir Madhi			
09:15	Plenaries 1.2 - From Forest to Global Spread: The Changing Ecology and Evolution of Mpox Virus - Alessandra Scagliarini			
09:45	Tea/Coffee break			
	1.4 One Health: bridging human, animal and environmental health - Session chair Felicity Burt	1.5 Understanding plant viruses - Session Chair Sandiswe Mbewana	1.6 From gut to lung: enteric and respiratory viruses - Session Chair Florette Treurnicht	
10:15	Reframing the epidemiology of Rift Valley fever virus - Thompson, Peter		Lineage turnover among G1P[8] and G2P[4] rotaviruses is associated with increased disease severity post vaccine introduction in Blantyre, Malawi - Mhango, Chimwemwe	
10:30	Identification of insect-specific viruses in mosquitoes collected in north-eastern parts of South Africa using a metagenomic RNA sequencing approach - Kacnik, Sascha	Invited Talk: A quest for the development of a universal influenza vaccine in plants. - Sandiswa Mbewana	Decadal insights into genetic diversity and evolutionary dynamics of noroviruses circulating among children under five years in Gauteng, South Africa. - Mogotsi, Milton	
10:45	Reemergence of chikungunya in Mauritius driven by a novel lineage with pandemic potential - Ramuth, Magalutcheemee	Plant produced Nipah VLP vaccine candidate for pandemic preparedness - O'Kennedy, Martha	Decade Long Genomic Surveillance of Enteric Adenovirus F40/41 in South Africa Reveals Persistent Lineages and Emerging Antigenic Variation - Shange, Nkosazana	
11:00	First Genomic Detection of Veterinary Viruses of Concern at Human–Animal Interfaces in Rural Ghana Using a One Health Metagenomics Framework - Mavian, Carla	Application of High-Throughput Sequencing to Detect Residual Virus and Viroid Infections in South African Nuclear Grapevine Material - Morgan, Seamus	Assessment of Gastroenteritis Virus Diversity in Wastewater across South Africa using Long Read Next Generation Sequencing - Mistry, Sneha	
11:15	Passive surveillance for zoonotic diseases in Australian bats - Jansen Van Vuren, Petrus	Tomato curly stunt virus – disease complex in South Africa overcoming resistance - Morgan, Seamus	Modulation of Lipid Droplets and β-Oxidation Influences Rotavirus Replication in HEK293 cells - O'Neill, Hester G.	
11:30	Molecular and metagenomic investigation identified emerging and re-emerging zoonotic pathogens in wild rodents in urban settings in Gauteng, South Africa. Macintyre, Caitlin	Evaluation of Plant-Expressed TMV Pseudovirions Encapsidating AHSV5-VP2 mRNA in Mice - Tinarwo, Dr Munyaradzi (presented by Ed Rybicki)	Secreted Fungal Factors Inhibit Rotavirus Replication, While Viral Infection Promotes Candida Albicans Growth - Barron, Nikita	
11:45	Poster Presentation session			
12:45	Lunch			
	Session chair: Armanda Bastos			
13:30	Plenaries 2.1 - Veterinary vaccines:“Chasing the Last Virus: Lessons from Global Animal Disease Eradication” - Baptiste Dungu			
14:00	Plenaries 2.2 - Disease Surveillance Using Wastewater: From Piloting to Implementation and Integration into Clinical Case-Based Surveillance Systems in South Africa - Mukhlid Yousif			
14:30	Industry Introduction Session - Promolab (Pty) Ltd T/A Separations, AFMS (Gregers Chalker), Inqaba Biotec			
	2.3 One Health: bridging human, animal and environmental health - Session Chair Marietjie Venter	2.4 HIV and sexually transmitted diseases - Session Chair Nishi Prabdia-Sing	2.5 From gut to lung: enteric and respiratory viruses - Session Chair Nicole Wolter	
15:00	Under the radar: sandflies as neglected targets for arbovirus disease surveillance in Africa - Tchouassi, David	Heterologous immunization with improved HIV-1 subtype C vaccines elicit autologous Tier 2 neutralizing antibodies with rapid viral replication control after SHIV challenge. - Chapman, Rosamund	Pre-vaccination enterovirus differential abundance strongly associates with ETVAX non-response in Zambian children aged 6 to 23 months - CHIBESA, Kennedy	
15:15	Molecular and metagenomic analysis of wastewater and surface water in Gauteng, South Africa, for the detection of emerging, zoonotic, and other viruses of public health significance - Govindasamy, Lekita	Viral Pathogens in Advanced HIV Disease: Insights from Minimally Invasive Tissue Sampling - Reddy, Denasha	Respiratory virome in children presenting with acute respiratory tract infection - HOFSTRA, Marije	
15:30	Rabies takes to Sea:Emergence of a marine maintenance Host, the Cape Fur Seal, in southern Africa - Van Helden, Lesley	Cytomegalovirus Infection in HIV-exposed Preterm Infants - Prins, Nicole	The in vitro effect of SARS coronavirus 2 co-infection on lytic reactivation of an oncogenic herpesvirus - ROMAN, Kayleigh	
15:45	Emerging Arboviruses in Romagna (Italy): vector surveillance, human diagnostics and genomic insights. - Scagliarini, Alessandra	Virus cell-to-cell transmission- from herpesviruses to coronaviruses” - Krystyna Bieńkowska-Szewczyk	Pre-existing immunity to seasonal influenza cross-recognises avian H5N1 - Wendy Burgers	
16:00	Free evening (Optional Bush Braai - Booking required)			

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DAY 3: 17 September 2026

Session chair Nicola Page			
07:30	Registration & Arrival refreshments, coffee and tea		
08:00	Plenaries 3.1 - Can we improve the differential efficacy of oral rotavirus vaccines in Africa? - Duncan Steel		
08:30	Plenaries 3.2 - Transmission dynamics of foot and mouth disease virus, a highly infectious picornavirus at the wildlife-livestock interface in southern Africa - Francois Maree		
	3.3 HIV and sexually transmitted viral diseases - Session Chair Carolyn Willimson	3.4 Viral diseases of animals - Session Chair Francois Maree	3.5 Vaccines for viruses - Session Chair Anna-Lise Williamson
09:00	Detection Of Human Papillomavirus In Wastewater Using The Seegene Allplex HPV 28 Assay - Mthombeni Mduduzi	Foot-and-mouth disease virus persistence in cattle: regulatory and food-security impacts - Armanda Bastos	Application of a plasmid DNA-based reverse genetics platform for bluetongue virus in commercial vaccine manufacturing - Mlingo, Tendai Aleck Matsa
09:15	125 - Performance of the in-house partial multiplex PCR for HIV-1 drug resistance testing – a cost saving strategy - Van Eck Kiara		Plant-Based Display of Influenza M2e on AP205 Virus-Like Particles as a Universal Vaccine Candidate - Tshiitamune, Andani
09:30	Assessing the impact of HIV exposure on T-cell responses to BCG vaccine in South African infants - Moses, Blessing	Transcriptomic Signatures of Resilience and Susceptibility in Lumpy Skin Disease Virus (LSDV) Infection - Jansen Van Vuren, Petrus	Recombinant lumpy skin disease virus expressing foot and mouth disease antigens induces neutralising antibodies - Chineka Nicole
09:45	Dominant circulation of hepatitis C virus genotype 1 strains in Gauteng Province, South Africa, 2021 to 2024 - Seethal, Yuvadia	Prevalence of African swine fever virus in selected warthog (Phacochoerus africanus) tissues in South Africa - Craig, Anthony	Biopharmed Mpox VLP candidate vaccines validated in a mice model - O'Kennedy,Martha
10:00	Seroprevalence of HIV, HBV, HCV, and genotyping/mutational analysis of HBV and HCV among drug users in Pretoria, South Africa - Ratshisusu, Lufuno	Establishment of in vitro persistent infection of the foot-and-mouth disease virus SAT 2 serotype and comparative viral genome analysis during acute and persistent infections - Nocaka, Linda	
10:15	Coffee & Tea break Poster presentations Session Chair: Ed Rybicki		
11:15	Industry Session: Vaccine development and production in South Africa, setting the stage	Ebrahim Mohamed (Biovac); Gerhardt Boukes (Afrigen) ; Otto Koekemoer (Design Bio); OBP; Kubendran NAIDOO (Rubic One Health); Abdullah Ely (AGTU Wits), Martha O'Kennedy (CSIR); Margaret Nolan and Louis Maartens (Deltamune); Sandiswa Mbewana(Biopharma Unit)	
12:50	Lunch		
13:40	4.1 Enteric and Respi - Session Chair: Janet Mans	4.2 Clinical and diagnostics - Session Chair: Kerri-Lee Ann Francois	4.3 Emerging Viruses - Session Chair: Megan Shaw
13:40	Prevalence and Histo-Blood Group Antigen Blocking Activity of Antibodies against Predominant Norovirus Genotypes in South African Children - MANS, Janet	Deep molecular sequencing to determine drug-resistance and vaccine escape mutations and genotypes of hepatitis B circulating in South Africa - KOSAN, Hussein	Invited speaker: Epidemiology and Zoonotic Transmission of Nipah Virus: An Emerging Epidemic Threat - SHAW, Megan
13:55	Seroincidence of influenza in South Africa in 2023 from population-based community serosurveys - WOLTER, Nicole	Metagenomic characterisation of microbial and resistome profiles in hospital wastewater from selected hospitals in the Free State province, South Africa. - MBELE, Angela	Arenavirus Transmission and Evolution in a Zoo, Germany - MEHL, Calvin
14:10	Diversity of Enteroviruses detected in Sewage Samples from Gauteng province, South Africa - VAN ZYL, Walda	The "Double Hit" of HBV Subgenotype A1: Mechanobiological Remodelling and Oncogenic β-catenin Translocation in HBV-transfected Cells. LAMOLA, Modisaotsile	Development of species-specific immunoreagents for the rapid diagnosis of different Ebola virus species. - CHEN, Chia-Yu
14:25	Evaluation of South Africa’s 2025 acute flaccid paralysis surveillance and laboratory performance against national and international benchmarks - PADAYACHEE, Kerry Ann	Development of a lateral flow antigen test kit for Covid-19 diagnosis - WANDERA APONDI, Ernest	Molecular Epidemiology of the Clade 2.3.4.4 H5N1 High Pathogenicity Avian Influenza Epidemic in South Africa, 2025-2026 - ABOLNIK, Celia
14:40	Identification and genomic characterisation of BA.3.2: a highly divergent BA.3-related SARS-CoV-2 lineage from southern Africa - DOR, Graeme	Translating gammaherpesvirus infection dynamics into novel diagnostics for clinical care in South Africa - SCHAFER, Georgia	Investigating the emergence and spread of European bat lyssavirus 1 in UK serotine bats through viral and host genetics - GOLDING, Megan

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DAY 3: 17 September 2026 (continued)

14:55	Change over		
15:00	4.4 HIV and sexually transmitted viral diseases - Session Chair Nishi Prabdial-Sing	4.5 Viral diseases of animals - Session chair: Claude Sabetha	4.6 Vaccines for viruses - Session Chair Baptisete Dungu
15:00	A descriptive molecular analysis of HIV-1 Integrase strand transfer inhibitor associated mutations from South African genomes - Kekana, Rosinah	Lung lesions associated with emerging gammaherpesviruses in horses and donkeys in South Africa - Williams, June	Impact of Age on Antibody Response Following FMD Vaccination in Cattle in Kenya. - Mugambi, Gloris
15:15	Changes in the HIV-1 reservoir in South African HIV+ to HIV+ kidney transplant recipients - Mbhele, Nokuzola	Immunometabolism at the intersection of immune and metabolic signalling against African horse sickness virus - Mathabela, Nomfundo	Improving the Field Performance of Baculovirus Biopesticides for Citrus Pest Control by Nano- and Microvesicle Encapsulation - Manamela, Ralethoko
15:30	Oncogenic Viral Marker (HHV8) and Tumour Proliferation (KI67) in Paediatric Kaposi Sarcoma: A 21-Year study at a Tertiary Laboratory in Ga-Rankuwa - Mhlongo, Lucia Naddy	Neutrophil myeloperoxidase index in juvenile dogs with parvoviral enteritis - Loubser, Louis	Development of a Self-Amplifying Vaccine Platform derived from Nodamura Virus - Rybicki, Ed
15:45		Clinical Signs, Lesions and Viral Antigen Distribution in Alpacas (Vicugna pacos) Naturally Infected with Rift Valley Fever Virus - Odendaal, Lieza	Locally manufactured mRNA respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) vaccine induces robust immunogenicity in a mouse model - Roanne Keeton

19:00 Gala dinner

DAY 4: 18 September 2026

08:00	Registration & Arrival refreshments, coffee and tea	8:20 : Annual General Meeting - Breakout venue 1	
	Session Chair Wolfgang Preiser		
09:00	Plenaries 5.1 - Using salt (water) to treat viral infections. Science behind an ancient remedy - Sandeep Ramalingam		
09:30	Plenaries 5.2 - Application of Epstein-Barr Virus proteome microarrays to characterize humoral immune response and define immune signatures for risk of EBV-associated cancers - Denise L Doolan		
10:00	Plenaries 5.3 Sequencing Breakthrough Infections to Inform Future HIV Prevention Trials - Carolyn Williamson		
10:30	Prize Giving		
10:40	Tea/Coffee break		
	5.4 Clinical and diagnostic virology - Session Chair: Kreshalen Govender	5.5 Antiviral and therapeutics -Session Chair: Kerri-Lee Ann Francois	5.6 Emerging viruses and outbreaks - Session Chair: Wolfgang Preiser
11:00	Establishing a Virology Biobank Linking Diagnostic and Research Laboratories - Von Mollendorff, Tara-Lee	Small Molecule Inhibition of the Mitochondrial Lipid Transfer Protein STARD7 Attenuates Influenza Viral Replication - Shaw, Megan	Diagnostics and emerging diseases - PREISER , Wolfgang
11:15	Investigating two agnostic metagenomic tools for viral discovery and characterisation - Mahlangu, Tshegofatso Perseverance	Developing a High Throughput Screening Assay for the Discovery of SARS-CoV-2 Entry Inhibitors - Adams, Ethan	
11:30	Dominance of cytomegalovirus glycoprotein B genotype 3 among patients in Johannesburg, South Africa, 2022–2023 - LETLONKANA, Pholenyana Petronela	The Application of a SARS-CoV-2 Replicon System for Antiviral Drug Screening - Singh, Nikita	Laboratory investigation of tanapox, Mpumalanga, South Africa, 2024 - Govender, Kamini
11:45	Chronic Hepatitis C Coinfection Prevalence in Adult Multicentre Urban HIV/ART Settings in South Africa - Khanyi Bongani	Effects of crude extracts of fungal endophytes isolated from Artemisia afra on SARS-CoV-2 pseudovirus-induced hyper-inflammation - Maake, Tumiso Mmatsie	Lineage-Specific Transcriptional Response to Chikungunya ECSA and West African Lineages in Primary Human Chondrocytes - Sigal, Alex
12:00	Artificial Intelligence for Antibody Quantification in Rabies Serological Assays - Amaya-Cuesta, Joan	Targeting SARS-CoV-2 Main Protease to Address Variant Resistance and Pandemic Preparedness - Setshedi, Mpho	Understanding the evolutionary history of mpox virus in Africa - Sitharam, Nikita
12:15	END OF CONFERENCE		
12:30	Lunch		