SUBMISSION OF THE SAVC TO THE HONOURABLE MINISTER
SENZENI ZOKWANA: AUGUST 2014

1. STRATEGIC IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

The Vision: Advancing public and animal health through quality veterinary services for all.

The SAVC’s strategic goals for the period 2014-2016 are:

- **Goals 1 and 4**: Being relevant to the needs of the country: both the SAVC and the veterinary professions and to review all legislation accordingly;
- **Goal 2**: Pro-actively manage stakeholders relationships;
- **Goal 3**: Facilitation of the unification of the veterinary professions; and
- **Goal 5**: Resource Mobilisation.

To achieve its goals the SAVC will implement steps as follows:

**Goals 1 and 4: Relevance for Needs of the country, legislation**

- Communicate the One Health Concept;
- Align with the National Development Plan, the Millennium Goals and the DAFF plans;
- Deal with the challenges to secure food safety and security;
- Develop modern relevant legislation;
- Improve on the SAVC’s core functions;

**Goal 2: Stakeholder relationships**

- Build relationship with Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries;
- Build relationships with Ministers of Health and Rural Development;
- Improve dialogue with veterinary professions, associations and state veterinary services.

**Goal 3: Unification of the veterinary professions**

- Improve communication: correspondence, social media and liaison;
- Market the value of the veterinary professions;
- Facilitate unification by establishing a national Bourgelat Committee;
- Create platforms for engagement.

**Goal 5: Mobilisation of Resources**

- Investigate alternative income streams;
- Assess, identify and improve internal efficiencies.
The SAVC is most appreciative for the opportunity to meet with the Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries.

2. THREATENED OR PROTECTED SPECIES [TOPS]: PERMITS FOR VETERINARIANS

The regulations published in terms of the National Environmental Management: Biodiversity Act, 2004 require that veterinarians in addition to registration with the SAVC obtain permits to treat TOPS. The SAVC is of the opinion that:

- Veterinarians are registered with the SAVC in terms of the Veterinary and Para-Veterinary Professions Act, Act No 19 of 1982 (“Veterinary Act”) to render veterinary services.
- The SAVC regulates the conduct of veterinarians.
- The rendering of a veterinary service is not a restricted activity in terms of the NEMBA and it could never have been the intention of NEMBA to regulate veterinary care of TOPS and require veterinarians to obtain permits before treating injured and/or ill TOPS if regard is taken of the objects of NEMBA.
- Veterinarians should not be required to obtain permits to render veterinary services but TOPS owners/persons who exercise physical control over TOPS and who are responsible for the welfare of their animals should be required to be in possession of permits.
- In so far as needs be the Minister should exempt the rendering of a veterinary service from the permit requirements of NEMBA.

The SAVC exhausted all avenues to address its concerns and did not manage to convince the Departmental Officials to understand the dilemmas for the veterinary profession when they treat or move animals for treatment and/or have to collect specimens. The SAVC requests that the honourable Minister engages the Minister of Environmental Affairs and facilitates the exemption of veterinarians from the requirement to obtain permits.

3. REGULATION OF MEDICINES: AND STOCK REMEDIES UNDER TWO ACTS

- The supply of unregistered, unsafe and cheap medicines presents a problem for food safety and human health.
- The supply of medicines to members of the public by persons without the required training poses further threats for the health and well-being of both humans and animals in the country.
- The regulation of medicines under two Acts [Acts 101 of 1965 and Act 36 of 1947] leaves much to be desired when the laws have to be applied and leaves the use of medicines open for abuse.
- The illegal manufacture of so-called autogenous vaccines and the compounding of medicines with involvement of veterinarians are a major concern for the SAVC.
- The SAVC met on a number of occasions with the Registrar of Act 101 of 1965 and specifically on on 11 February 2013 during which meeting challenges regarding autogenous vaccines were discussed to seek clarity on inter alia whether compounded vaccines were compounded from a registered raw material or compounded from vaccine made by another person (Admixing).
Autogenous vaccines were defined as vaccines compounded from an agent [bacteria disease] found from an animal on a farm and isolated from that farm;

- During this meeting it was noted that from a pharmaceutical perspective compounding from a new chemical couldn’t be done willy-nilly because it must be done by a manufacturer who had to undergo all the licensing and registering processes; It became clear that the Registrar [Act 101 of 1965] was however of the opinion that the MCC did not control or regulate compounding or the manufacture of autogenous vaccines.

- The SAVC has for a number of consecutive years requested the Registrars of the abovementioned Acts to meet to resolve the problems in particular where there is confusion regarding the responsibility of the regulation of medicines. The Registrar of Act 101 of 1965 was again requested to meet with her counterpart at the said meeting and subsequently.

- Several meetings were held with the Registrar of Act 36 of 1947 or representatives.

- In addition to the concerns mentioned above, the delays in registration of medicines need to be addressed.

- We are informed that the Minister of Health has to abide by the requirements of the World Health Organisation and that an Antimicrobial Resistance Task Team was established by the medical fraternity in Cape Town, as it was alleged that the use of antimicrobials by veterinarians resulted in drug resistance and they wanted to form a lobby group to ban the use of veterinary antibiotics in food producing animals. If our information is correct then the SAVC requests that the veterinary profession and its representatives are at least consulted on the matter.

**The SAVC exhausted all avenues to address the concerns relating to medicines and requests the Honourable Minister to engage the Minister of Health and to seek solutions to the control and use of veterinary medicines.**

4. **FOOD SAFETY AND SECURITY**

The SAVC established a Food Safety and Security Committee and the Committee met for the first time on 8 February 2010. The SAVC regards food safety and security as a key deliverable. The Committee is in the process to recommend to the SAVC that a dedicated portfolio be established to deal with the matters relating to food safety and security. The One Health Concept will be used to ensure that the SAVC achieves its goals in securing safe food and security for the people in SA.

5. **COMPULSORY COMMUNITY SERVICE [CCS]**

- Act 16 of 2012 assented to by the President is the Amendment Act which has not been enacted pending the finalisation of the Compulsory Community Service [CCS] regulations. CCS will be implemented once the regulations are finalised. The honourable Minister will be requested to approve the regulations once finalised.

- The SAVC and the veterinary profession support the implementation of CCS as it is regarded as one of the means to bring veterinary services to all peoples of SA.
As mentioned, Act 16 of 2012 is not enacted, and whilst it is pending the finalisation of the CCS regulations, the SAVC has no investigative powers to investigate illegal activities of either veterinary professionals or lay persons. The SAVC and the veterinary professions are concerned that the protracted delay in finalisation of the CCS regulations is a setback in the achievements of the past and progress made with the amendments to the Act is now unnecessarily delayed.

The Act as amended makes provision for:

**IMPROVED ACCESS TO VETERINARY SERVICES**
- Compulsory Community Service
- Permanent residence as opposed to citizenship

**AN INSPECTORATE**
- Powers of officers & other persons to conduct an inspection
- Refusal to cooperate
- Appointments of Investigators
- Diagnosing treating or preventing a physiological condition
- Cooperation and liaison with other bodies
- Contravention of all Acts by members of the professions
- Contravention of the Veterinary Act by laypersons and professionals not registered with the SAVC

**AN IMPROVED INVESTIGATION PROCESS & APPEAL PROCESS**
- Suspension of Registration to protect the profession and public
- Provision for an order regarding costs
- Ad hoc Appeal Committee with expertise
- Appeals by any person whose rights may be adversely affected
- Appeals Committee affords the aggrieved party a further opportunity to have the matter reviewed

**COMPULSORY VETERINARY COMMUNITY SERVICE [CCS]**
- CCS will address the lack of a sufficient number state veterinarians to render the services to the state and communities.
- Food security and safety is an increasing concern in SA and community service will contribute to the solutions.
- It will also fill a need in other sectors where there is a lack of a sufficient number of veterinarians.
- The veterinary profession is in full support of CCS.
- CCS will further address the immediate-after-graduation migration of newly qualified veterinarians to overseas countries
- The increase in animal disease outbreaks related to globalisation of trade
PROVISION FOR AN ORDER REGARDING COSTS

- To avoid the unnecessary postponement and delay of inquiries into professional conduct of registered veterinarians and para-veterinary professionals, the Council seeks an amendment to enable the Council to impose a cost order on registered persons to serve as a deterrent.

APPEALS BY ANY PERSON WHO'S RIGHTS MAY BE ADVERSELY AFFECTED

- The purpose of the amendment is to provide for the right to appeal to the appeal committee if an affected person is not satisfied with the outcome of an inquiry into the professional conduct of a registered professional.

SUSPENSION OF REGISTRATION UNTIL COMPLAINTS CAN BE HEARD

- Inquiries into the professional conduct of registered veterinarians and para-veterinary professional take time to finalise.
- Certain complaints warrant the suspension of members pending the finalisation of the inquiry and appeal process in order to protect the public and the animals.
- Provision needs to be made for registered persons who do not comply with the conditions for continuing professional development.

REGISTRATION OF A PERSON WHO HAS COMPLETED THE RELEVANT QUALIFICATIONS BUT WHICH HAS NOT BEEN CONFERRED

- Many graduates are not in the position to fully pay any outstanding student fees upon successful completion of the qualification.
- The Amendment Bill will empower the graduate to make such payment by permitting the graduate to register as a professional and earn an income, provided that the institution confirms the graduate’s academic compliance.

Of particular concern is the lack of investigative powers of the SAVC and the honourable Minister is requested to facilitate the legal process to enact those sections of Act No 16 of 2012 which are not dependent on the CCS regulations.

7. THE PROPOSED MEAT GAME SCHEME

- The SAVC and the veterinary profession are displeased with the excessively protracted process in the finalisation of the Game Meat Scheme.
- The decision not to proceed with the Game Meat Scheme destroys a possible interim solution to regulate the harvesting of game meat.
- The SAVC and stakeholders are also concerned that there are no formal structures in place to regulate the harvesting of game meat, which presents a food safety and security risk.
- Council recommends that the Game Meat Scheme should still be utilised as an interim measure, pending the amendment of the regulations.
- Game meat is a potential source of valuable protein.
8. WILDLIFE RANCHING SOUTH AFRICA [WRSA VS DAFF, SAVC & THE MEDICINES CONTROL COUNCIL [MCC]]

The WRSA instituted legal action and brought an application against the abovementioned respondents in August 2013 essentially objecting to Rule 10 of the rules for veterinarians relating to the use of medicines and restricting anaesthesia to be performed by veterinarians. Several attempts were made to settle the matter out of court, however it appears that the outcome of a court decision will answer the much debated question as to who may anaesthetise [chemically immobilise] animals.

9. COMPETITION COMMISSION

- The SAVC entered into a settlement agreement with the Competition Commission following allegations were submitted that the SAVC annually compiled and published a Guideline of Tariffs that prescribed minimum and maximum fees to be charged for veterinary services across the country, and obliged members to comply with it. In this regard, the SAVC took disciplinary action against veterinarians who deviated from pricing in terms of the Guideline. It was alleged that veterinarians who charged below the Guideline were charged for canvassing and touting.
- The matter will be concluded by Tribunal on 20 August 2014.
- The SAVC will however meet with the Competition Commission after the Tribunal hearing with a view to apply for certain exemptions of rules for the veterinary profession under review by the SAVC’s Review Committee.
  - the retention of experience [the veterinary profession is declared a scarce skill profession and the services should be retained in SA],
  - promotion of small business [most practices are regarded as small businesses and therefore small economic hubs providing employment to a large number of persons],
  - preventing the decline of the profession [the veterinary profession is a scarce skill profession and more so in rural areas],
  - promotion of service delivery to the disadvantaged community [every practice, animal welfare organisation and state veterinary office can make a difference. CCS is to be introduced], and
  - maintenance of economic stability [each veterinary practice, animal welfare organisation and state veterinary office contributes to the stability of the economy through employment opportunities, extension services and upliftment of communities].

10. SAVC’s NEW PREMISES: OPENING

- Council entered into an Agreement of Sale in September 2013 to procure new offices at Route 21 Corporate Park, Irene and sold its previous property located at 874 Stanza Bopape street, Arcadia, Pretoria.
- The transfer of the new property into the name of the SAVC is expected to go through by the end of September 2014. The first Council meeting at the new building will be held on 21 October 2014.
11. VETERINARY PARA PROFESSIONS

The SAVC intends to bring new veterinary para professions on board:

- Veterinary Welfare Assistants [VWA]: This profession derives its origins from Animal Welfare Assistants currently authorised by Council [since 1995] to render veterinary and veterinary para-professional services mainly to indigent communities under auspices of animal welfare organisations. VWAs will qualify with a one-year distance learning certificate from Unisa;

- Veterinary Physiotherapist: This profession derives from an increased need for services of physiotherapist in particular in the horse racing industry. In this regard it needs to be brought to your attention that human physiotherapists strongly object to the use of the word physiotherapist and are in the process of obtaining legal opinion. The SAVC obtained legal input and based thereon will proceed to request promulgation of the profession of veterinary physiotherapist;

- Meat Inspectors: The Performance Veterinary Report [PVS] of the World Animal Health Organisation [OIE] recommends the registration of Meat Inspectors with the SAVC; and

- Equine Dental Technicians: There is an increased need for the services of these technicians as horses no longer have the ability to retain their dental health by nutrition or diet. These technicians indicated that they wish to come on board.

The SAVC requests that the honourable Minister engages the Minister of Health to avoid legal action in the matter pertaining to the use of the word physiotherapist.