Final open session on Questions and Answers

Clive Marwick: We have three basic categories. Dr Anthea Flemming will summarise the activities of the day. Please also think about topics for the next Indaba.

Anthea Fleming: Thank you. One of our councillors said that he is not really sure how to log onto the members’ web portal and need some help. Ronel and Glen will come up shortly to go through that so that you can all see how easy it is to register and login onto the SAVC’s member web portal.

We started off this morning with a talk about the three strategic goals of council for this term: the first being transformation of the profession; the second being communication within the profession; and about an upward communication in terms of government essentially and then lateral communication to members to all the professionals, and then downwards communication which would be then to the public and to our clients.

We discussed the point on “what I get for my membership fees, and when the questions came up, do I think that council is good value for money?” There were quite a few people that thought not. So please, and I did ask you earlier to think about it, and I really mean it, we would really like to hear what you think. We need to do better; and

- What would be better value for money for you?

And then we had a very brief discussion about the budget. We had a question earlier about:

- How much do the inspections [routine inspections] cost?
- How much do the investigations [inspectorate] cost?

The SAVC’s website is active, obviously, it has been and it has got improvements going all the time. There are regular adverts on veterinary- and para-veterinary vacancies published on the website.

If you know you are wanted for a position, or if you are looking for a job or if you wanted to advertise to employ someone, please contact us so that we can put an advert there for you.

We had suggestions from the SAVA Pretoria branch about publishing state veterinary information, e.g. certification requirements and that sort of thing on the website.

The NEW member’s web portal is available to registered members. You go to the normal website then you click on the top menu bar on “member portal” if you are registering for the first time, then you need to put in your council registration number, put in your ID number, you will need to have
your cell phone with you, because you will get sent a little one time
password or a code of some description, unless of course it is top secret.
Do not tell anyone your password.

Okay then you click on register, then it is going to send a confirmation
code to the cell phone, that is it. Okay, so you need your glasses and
your cell phone when you want to do this. As easy as that. So now that
you are registered, you now go to login, put in your username that you just
chose, and the top secret password, then login.

If you have forgotten the password, if you click on the forgot my password
then you get an SMS, thank you. Then you can work it out and
everything is there. Then you can fill in all your information, make sure it
is correct, bearing in mind that council went through a huge process of
trying to recapture all our data. The migration of data from one system to
another is not without problems. So there may be mistakes. Please
change what is not correct. Then you get to the bottom then you click on
"save" and you are good to go.

So it is an excellent addition to our offering and we are very pleased that it
is there. We will be having a space where your CPD will be logged in this
members portal as well. When you attend the CPD event the providers
will in fact send the information through to the SAVC’ data base. It is not
done yet, but the idea is that you go to the conference, you sign the
register and the providers then send through information to council and it
comes through – you then go onto member's portal and it will reflect your
CPD, that you attended and your certificate will be there.

Q Unknown: Is there a space where the field of interest or sector can
be inserted?

A Anthea Fleming: Yes, for instance a member can ask us how many
people are involved in production animals and it can be done. Thank you.

Q Unknown: I would like to know how the Council decides to
increase the annual fees? What is it that Council look at to increase
the fees by a R 100/ R200 every year?

A Anthea Fleming: John explained that this year we only had a 6%
increase, the previous two years have been a 7.5% increase.

A Sive Nqawe: Thank you. How we decide on fees, basically we look at
inflation in the country and we look at Consumer Price Index [CPI] and
when that is taken into consideration then we look at the percentage
increase that the veterinary and para-veterinary professions will be able to
afford. The proposed increase is taken to the finance committee, it gets
deliberated by the finance committee. The President of Council is part of
the finance committee, Dr John Adam is the current chairperson and then
one member from the industry which is Dr Peter Oberem. They deliberate
and then once they decide on a percentage increase between 5% and
7%, because the current inflation in the country is about 6.9%.

There are fluctuations of course, but that is the current status right now. Then that percentage is presented to full Council and the Council members deliberate on it and they all agree that an increase between 5% or 6% is adequate to maintain the position and it is then implemented. Thank you.

A Clive Marwick: Thank you. A bit broader input on the questions is that the financial committee considers the expenses, it is a long and more involved process which involves more than only the Finance committee, it starts virtually at your Departmental Heads, your Registrar, they put down the expenses for Council activities over the next year.

That will then come in front of the financial committee. We will have a look at those expenses and either agree to them or disagree and say they should be cut or they should come in line with the needs of Council. And then once you have the expenses then you start looking at the inflation rate. We also take into consideration the economy of the country. That is very important for us as well.

We will then draw up, looking at different scenarios the income requirements and we will never budget for a loss. We always budget for a break even or for a small profit. It is a long process and a transparent process, and we publish the main budget votes [items] in our Newsletter, highlighting the main aspects of the budget. At any stage if any of the members feel that they would like to comment on that, they should come forward with their comments and ideas or criticism that is, they are all welcome.

But, one must remember that if you do not keep up with at least inflation that you start falling behind with what you can afford and then within a period of two- or three years you have to make dramatic increases in fees, you are looking at about 25 or 30% increases. We had this situation a couple of years ago when we re-aligned Council’s budgets to the needs of Council and that was quite a shock to a lot of members. We do not want that to happen again, that is why we try to keep up with inflation rather than going too high. Thank you very much.

Q Unknown: Thank you. Maybe mine is more of a comment, but a response will be welcomed whenever required or necessary. I am thinking of the current situation where we have a serious shortage of veterinarians, to say, I wonder whether Council is aware of what is happening in the field? For example, where I am working we have five municipalities in a district where only two veterinarians are available, meaning three positions are vacant. One was filled but we now have vacant veterinary posts.

So for almost a year now we have been working without veterinarians and the only two veterinarians available refuse to work in other areas. They
said we are not interested, we are not going to work on those other areas. If you have cases do not even bother referring the cases to us that is to their employer in our province. So animal health technicians have been doing the job. Vaccinating, treating for heartwater and doing this and that. And reports were being requested and we are submitting reports and it was escalated to DAFF.

As far as I am concerned as an animal health technician I am supposed to practice under a veterinary supervisor. When my report is regarded as official. I compiled a disease report, a list A, B, C and it forms part of the DAFF report. Should we not then be discussing, and hearing from veterinarians that animal health technicians are capable, let us release them under our direct supervision [meaning they need not work under direct supervision], as a sense of urgency as was stated in the transformation presentation.

I am appealing to Council and to the veterinarians to also agree that animal health technicians can work on their own. We have evidence that we have been working without supervision, but our reports were made official. I am doing buffalo tests. I am not reporting irregularities, please.

**Q Anthea Fleming:** I apologise for interrupting you, but am I understanding that what you are saying is that as animal health technician in your area there is no veterinarian who is prepared to work above you?

**A Unknown:** Yes.

**Q Anthea Fleming:** And you are employed by government?

**A Unknown:** Yes.

**Q Anthea Fleming:** So DAFF should have a veterinarian employed above you. Is that correct?

**A Unknown:** No. SAVC is saying an animal health technician cannot practice without supervision of a veterinarian.

**Q Anthea Fleming:** Yes, so what I am saying is that what your employer is expecting of you is to work in a way which is at odds with the rules?

**A Unknown:** Yes.

**A Anthea Fleming:** So we must get Dr Molefe to give a comment as to how that would work at DAFF or who should we ask, because that clearly should not be the case.

**Q Anthea Fleming:** Am I understanding that a request of Council is to allow para-veterinary professionals to work on their own?
A Unknown: I am saying, not only requesting, I am saying there is evidence that animal health technicians are able to work without veterinary supervision, so what is now holding them from being allowed?

A Anthea Fleming: Okay, so I think what is holding them from being allowed is the rules as they stand. That same argument could be used by many lay people who say but there is evidence that I can do this. That does not make it right. So what we have to do is, we have to debate it within the professions and come up with the change in the rules. If we use the argument that, because I can do it then it should be allowed, does not hold water.

The rules would have to be changed, if we consider the survey question and the response just now, where 77% of the veterinarians present thought it would be okay for para-veterinary professionals to work on their own and 90% of the para-veterinary professionals thought it would be okay for para-veterinary professionals to work on their own.

In this regard I have already spoken to Clive about it. We thought we would send out a survey to the entire membership to find out what the consensus is and then to see how we can make it work, because we need to transform the profession, exactly that and we need to do it with urgency.

We need to look at the rules, and how can we make it work to the benefit of the national herd and to the benefit of the pets in this country; and with the goal in mind of having accessible veterinary services for all.

So I hear what you are saying there and I think that is something that we have to take out of this Indaba very seriously, but I would still like to hear from Dr Molefe in terms of having a veterinarian in that area.

A Mphane Molefe: Thank you. I think her case was to present justification for motivating for para-veterinarians especially AHTs to be working independent of veterinarians; and maybe first of all as a member of Council I can then say this has already been tabled you know in recent times and it is something that we have started engaging on.

We saw all the professions saying that is something to be explored, so it gives us also then some leverage to say that this has been raised by the professions so let us discuss it. So it is on the table now. But in terms of the state veterinary capacity, yes, there are some areas that have some challenges in terms of getting state veterinarians, and at this point we are filling those gaps with Compulsory Veterinary Community Service [CCS] veterinarians where there are no veterinarians.

But remember as DAFF, I hope everybody understands what is DAFF, because some people think it is “a flying thing”. We mean, the national department, remember the national department does not have authority
over provincial departments. We can advise, but we cannot force them to do something else.

So that is something that has to be taken up with the provincial competent authority. First of all they have to request to get CCS veterinarians, compulsory community service veterinarians. If they do not apply for that we will not know what their needs are, but we have meetings where all provinces are represented, where we try to see where there are shortfalls and then we patch those.

Dr Matonsi is heading the CCS programme very well and in his second year it is going well. So this is one of those areas that we need to address. But at the same time some colleagues will remember that we talked about veterinary strategy a few years ago; and one of one of the deliverables of the veterinary strategy is private public partnerships.

In terms of getting private veterinarians or private para-veterinary professionals to see how we can compliment their services. You will remember that the OIE PVS report noted that there is a shortage of veterinarians in the country, not only in state veterinary services. Now, just how then do we help in terms of state veterinary services?

It is to use the capacity that is existing in the country to go into partnership with private veterinarians. If you have a veterinarian in an area why can you not have a model whereby, for some period of time, you can employ private veterinarians as state veterinarians and they do a veterinary activity and report as official veterinarians for that particular time that you have employed them to do that.

So that is a model that we are working on as well.

A Anthea Flemming: So I think the answer there is that we need to look at your particular area asking for applications for CCS vets and also then looking at private public partnerships [PPP]; and then the second part of your question was about working on your own, which we have established will be discussed and get moving on.

Gary Bauer: Thank you very much. I am really, really pleased that the Dr Molefe the last speaker just raised what he raised, because I have been sitting here today asking myself as a private veterinarian why I have actually come to this meeting; and it would have been a very good question to put up on your voting as to why people who are not involved directly in Council and who are not involved in the sub-committees and who are not involved in the state, why we have actually come to this Indaba?

And I think if we are all quite honest we come to it for our own selfish reasons, to break it down and to cut it really bluntly. But one of the other reasons that I came here for, I have raised it before with the Animal Health Forum; and we are working on a system to try and get professionals
together or try and get a group together to take PPPs forward, but I am very encouraged to hear what I have just heard now from DAFF.

I am extremely worried and the term that I used at the Animal Health Forum is that we are scheduled for time that just got to run its course; and it is going to blow up in our faces; that is with regards to brucellosis and tuberculosis and the above low population. Part of it is the incapacity to be able to deal with all the work that should be done, and that is where I am very pleased to hear that, because PPP is something that we have been trying to get going for a long time, but the other part of it is, the seemingly non consequencial and lack of accountability approach that has been taken by professionals that are required by law to be involved in the testing and transaction process.

I am talking now specifically about buffalo. And just in the last three weeks, three examples that will illustrate what I am saying, appointments are made, the earliest that you can get those professionals, is three- to four weeks after you called to get schedule them; and to do the testing and then to load and move the buffalo.

When that time comes those people have forgotten about their appointments; they do not put up somewhere else, make another appointment three- to four weeks later. Okay these might be individual cases, but this is happening more and more and I think I might be in the same province where you are, but I am not absolutely certain.

Second thing that happens is that we have got – two weeks ago, an Animal Health Technician raised the problem with me that she could not understand why we are putting such emphasis on brucellosis testing of buffalo, because it is only a condition of buffalo and cannot be transmitted to cattle and cannot be transmitted to people.

Now these are the professionals, that by law and by the veterinary procedural notice, are required to supervise me to do the testing on those animals. And I am not allowed to do it unless those professionals are there. The other comments that I have had is that professionals are not available to do the testing, but if my client will arrange someone else to do the testing then they will come out and do the buffalo immobilisation.

So we need to look very, very quickly at how we are going to address this issue which cannot wait, it cannot wait six months. It cannot wait a year and it cannot year eighteen months. It must be addressed as a matter of urgency. My big concern is that once the powers that be, whoever they are, whether it is Council, which is the custodian of veterinary services and the standards of veterinary practice in this country, or whether it is DAFF that is acknowledged and, I understand, does not have authority over the provinces, has to implement a moratorium on the movement and sale of buffalo, because we as professionals cannot implement the veterinary procedural notice. A moratorium will have disastrous consequences.
So I would like to have Council, the custodian of animal health in the country shared with DAFF, look at this as a matter of extreme urgency. Okay, I have got one or two other points, but on this topic now, I think this needs to be highlighted in bright yellow luminous lime green and we need to work on it.

A Anthea Fleming: Okay, I am going to ask Clive if he has got any comments as to what we should do or Gary if you have any suggestions? You know earlier there was a discussion about how we need to be careful about whose role is what, so that we do not have duplication of effort and so that we know, that things are done effectively. I think that it is important that we look at that.

Peter Vervoort: If you are going to give me the option I might not stop this afternoon. I think we are well aware, at the Animal Health Forum, of this problem. We know it is one of the problems facing severe challenges, with filling the posts and we know why, and mostly because of employing professionals on contract basis, which were not renewed. The contracts were not renewed, because the professionals placed in those contractual posts did/ do not fill the requirements for public service appointments, but they may be appointed for a period of time and those contracts were not renewed.

We know about the fact, and both of the problems that we spoke about was in one province. There are other provinces also facing challenges. I think we also have to stop talking about DAFF all the time, because DAFF does not have the chain of command over the provinces and that is our biggest problem that we have in veterinary services.

We are working on that with DAFF to see if we can come up with some solutions and I think the one thing that has come up today and we have heard from DAFF as well, we cannot blame DAFF and the provinces for everything that goes wrong. We need to get involved as veterinarians as the profession as para-veterinary professionals; and we need to get involved in solving problems.

We need to get public private partnerships going otherwise we are going nowhere. I am telling you people that today. Council will not solve these problems. DAFF will not solve these problems. Private veterinarians will not solve these problems. Unless we are going to public, private partnerships for a lot of things, buffalo testing is one of the great examples of which a public private partnership, properly put together will work, because it is very difficult for some of the provinces to justify having their understaffed officials go out, spend the day buffalo testing, one buffalo where they could have seen fifty individual farmers on that day, on a farmers’ day or something like that.

So we need to realise these things. There are serious pressures on these professionals to perform at the right level and the perform the right tasks.
Certain things, we as the private industry and I have put myself there, because that is who I represent need to take hands with DAFF to solve those problems.

If we do not take hands with each other and we start throwing stones and we start blaming, we are not going to solve problems. All we are going to do is create animosity between all the different groups which is going to be of no advantage of nobody.

Q Anthea Fleming: So what would you suggest that we do?

A Peter Vervoordt: We need to discuss with DAFF and the Provincial Directors about the posts that are not being filled and on the buffalo side we need to sit down and say how do we get a system that works? You have heard DAFF now a few times saying that they are quite open to private veterinarians doing work on behalf of the state.

I personally have asked Council to investigate how we can do this so that everybody is happy. There is at the moment, let me just call a spade a spade, there is mistrust between private veterinarians and state veterinarians. Alright, and unless we solve that problem we are going nowhere.

Q Anthea Fleming: So how are we going to solve it? Should Council have a meeting?

A Peter Vervoordt: Unless you sit around the table and talk to each other and this afternoon, that is one of the advantages, when we are finished, sit down, have a beer with each other, have a single malt and actually sit down and discuss things. We all want to do things in meetings, okay, where we force other people to do things, we do not even understand each other.

We heard this morning, and I am sorry I was not there for the whole talk. You got to decide if you want to be one of the people that is going to make the change. And if we all sit here and start looking back at the past and what was right or what was wrong in the past or who did what yesterday or who did what the day before, guys let us pack it all in.

Okay, let us stop, unless we are out there to say how do we all get together and make things work? Not this is not working because of this and this, that is easy, anybody can do that, it is how do we get together and how do we make these things work.

Q Anthea Fleming: So the thing is we have got a room full of people here who could sit down and have an informed discussion and that is great, and we will all be okay, cool, let us go forward and do this, but the problem is that this is stuff that has to be governed by provincial or whoever, so we still have to get the right people in the room, around the table to say yes, this private, public partnership will work.
I mean we need to do that and we need to do that urgently. So I think my question is who are the people who need to sit around the table and how can we facilitate that urgently?

**A Peter Vervoordt:** I can now give you twenty different problems, challenges, let us call them that, that need to be solved in the future. We cannot all sit around the table and solve twenty different things. We are going to have twenty different groups of people that are going to each try and solve a problem. If you people knew all the challenges that we at the Animal Health Forum are handling at the moment, okay, from state laboratories to this whole thing of posts not being filled, to CCS that needs to work properly, to brucellosis, to tubercullosis to buffalo, Veterinary Procedural Notices [VPNs] not being implemented, to boarder fences which are not functioning, do you want a list of twenty things?

**Anthea Fleming:** Well of course we have got to start somewhere.

**A Peter Vervoordt:**

So we are tackling all those things. What I am asking you people and I am asking private veterinarians and I am asking state veterinarians and I am asking state animal health technicians, whoever, get on board with your provincial animal health forums and start solving your problems locally.

Joseph van Heerden said to me today, you know what he is going to start tackling? Brucellosis. He is going to get ten of his farmers in an area together and tell them that they are now going to control brucellosis on those ten farms. That is the way to do it. We are not going to get this massive top down approach, where, excuse my saying this, but the nationalist party tells everybody what to do, because we are used to that and we still think that is the way.

Some people in government still thinks that, that is the way that you are going to get a top down approach and make things work. People, we are South Africa, we are going to make things work, okay. If we expect the politicians to make things work for us, heaven help us all.

**Anthea Fleming:** Yes, I am going to also feel I need to clap.

**Gary Bauer:** I agree with everything that is being said now. The only little caviar on the top of this is that at the moment there is a legal notice governing how things should be done and it is not happening. I agree we need to sit down and we need to fix it up and we need to fix it fast. The problem is at the moment in the area that I am in, I stick my neck out and say 80% of buffalo work is being done illegally and against the procedural notice that has been issued.

That is my problem. There are some of those that are refusing to do it.
illegally and we are losing those buffalo owning clients to private practices that are trying to work the best for the system. So I agree that we need to work it out, we need to get together and we need to sit, and I quoted some extreme, there are wonderful animal health technicians that I work with in my area as well.

They are never late, they are always there, there is never a problem, somehow they get around the fuel problem, they have got problems that we do not even think about, guessing about. They are using their own private vehicles to get to the work that they do, but they are there and they do work.

I completely agree with what has been said about why should an animal health technician or a state vet be required to travel 200 kilometres to see one buffalo bull if they could be seeing fifty or sixty farmers in the area? I totally agree with that, and I support it and I understand that they should not be doing that.

The problem is that legally our hands are tied with regards to what we can and cannot do, and unless we stick to that notice, if someone reports us to Council we would be acting out of the law of the land and we will have no option but to be found guilty by council.

**Q Anthea Fleming:** So do you have a suggestion as to what Council could do to help?

**A Gary Bauer:** Well I think somebody needs to, and the Animal Health Forum is maybe the right forum to do it, but somebody needs to – I do not know how we are going to do it, because unless that VPN is changed or rescinded or is adopted we have to stick to what is in there until that gets changed. We can start and initiate steps to try and work around it.

We have just heard now that we can co-op people outside of the state to do work on behalf of the state. That was looked at a year or two or three ago, and it for some reason, I do not really know, I was not involved in it, it did not really work out.

But all I am saying, I will put my name forward as a private vet to come and assist in whatever way we need to do, but it cannot carry on like it is now.

**Anthea Fleming:** Yes, I think we need to try and look at solutions that we can do, quickly. Maybe you should just contact your state veterinary person and say right this is not working, what can we do and see how you can make a plan. And in the meantime the other avenues can carry on.

**Unknown:** Thank you, the idea is, together we can do more.

Unfortunately the situation does not allow us to do that, but I still have hope that we can do more. Like the proposal that we have to come
together and put all those problems on the table and to see what to do, which is why we need the involvement of the Council, DAFF, Animal Health Forum, ourselves as animal health technicians, whoever really is required, we can come down and come up with a way of what to do.

I used to say to the people that we do not realise that we have powers. That is unfortunately, we are so isolated, that we cannot really express that power. Within two days the government can hear us, but unfortunately we are divided. At times, we think that we are oppressed by the same veterinarians as animal health technicians, to the extent that we feel really isolated.

It is like the kids in one family. Some are treated in this way and some are treated in another way. Referring to the government sector it is a disaster, as mentioned during the day there are posts which are not filled. In state service they say those posts are no longer funded and they are getting rid of those posts.

When you look at the career path of animal health technicians or careers in animal health [in that directorate] it is lean. I have to be a subordinate, I still have, maybe ten years, to go, you will wait for that post until another one resigns. There is a problem, which means there is no career path progression. But when you look to other directorates for example, we even have a director of Nguni cattle, because this person at provincial level is dealing with Nguni, giving to the farmers. There you will get a component of field management, a director of field management, an assistant director of field management. You will get the same in crop, and in agricultural economics, but when you come to veterinary or animal health there is no career path. We talk about TB and brucellosis, but we are overlooked even though our services are required.

We are desperate we do not know where to cry. So I suggest that let us come together, we can facilitate that. We are ready as the association of animal technicians to be engaged and sit down with those problems and see what will be the way forward. We cannot just live with this situation.

Ultimately, some people see the Council as not playing an important role in our lives. Why should they continue to pay the maintenance fees, while the Council is doing nothing for them?

When you cry to Dr Modisane he says no, I do not have any authority over the provinces.

**Anthea Fleming:** I hear what you are saying, it sounds to me, you are speaking as an animal health technician and you are talking about the career path in the state? Am I correct?

**Anthea Fleming:** Okay so Council does not have anything to do with the career paths.
Unknown: Okay, but what I am trying to say, because the same Council we had this thing of Occupation Specific Dispensation [OSD]. Where we expected Council to help. Some persons in government says veterinarians and animal technicians are not scientists, but now we have been left out for many years, and until such time that we approach the union to help us we will not be recognised.

We need to change the Act and cannot just be told that Act says this and that. Where there is a shortage we need to employ other professionals to do the job. Why cant we empower the other people to do the job? Why cant the private veterinarian do the testing- he can do it. It is just the legislation that needs to change.

Currently as I speak Avian influenza [bird flu] is coming from Zimbabwe, so who is going to look after that? The veterinarians and ourselves; and the same government, say guys the disease is coming. We will be accountable but when it comes to employment they forget about us.

So we need to sit down sooner or later to make sure that our voice is heard. If it is supposed that we have to go to the Parliamentary Portfolio Committee we will go and raise our voices. We cannot just let veterinary services be dealt with as somebody wishes and as if we do not exist.

We know our background, we know our practice, we know our job. Okay? But we are overlooked. Why? We have to do something. Amen.

Anthea Fleming: Thank you for your comments. I do just think though as we were speaking earlier about, we need to be very clear about whose job is what.

Council's position is not to a specific concern regarding career advances. Council's position is to regulate the professions, maintain the rules and regulations, monitor education, that sort of thing. So where there is a specific concern with one of the professions or para-veterinary professions and their employer that is not something Council can step into. Am I wrong?

Unknown: 3(g) of the Veterinary Act says to maintain and enhance the prestige status and dignity of the veterinary profession and para-veterinary profession and the integrity of persons practicing such professions. (e) says to encourage and promote efficiency and the responsibility with regard to the practice of veterinary profession and para-veterinary professions.

You are having a para-veterinary professional asking you here to make sure that occupations specific dispensations etc, career pathing in the state is sorted out. It needs to be looked at by Council. We had exactly the same problem 25 years ago when the SANDF was employing veterinarians at minimum wages. Council sorted that problem out.
The OSD thing for veterinarians has been sorted out now. Okay, if not, then it is something that has to be tackled by Council.

**Anthea Fleming:** Thank you. We already in consultation with government. We have AHT representation on Council and Mr Kutu presents the case for AHTs. I think what I was getting at, potentially I came across incorrectly. I think yes, the profession needs to be looked after by Council. That is what we need to do.

But we also need to work within the Act and the Rules. If we need to change the Rules and change the Act, then yes, we need to do that, but that takes time, and so I think if there is a – I think the concern of an AHTs progression through DAFF or not DAFF, through the provincial veterinary services is something that needs to be discussed at that level.

I am not saying that Council is not looking after all the professions and para-veterinary professions, that is why there is representation on Council.

**Clive Marwick:** I want to agree with Peter. I think this is important and in the last months gone by we had the situation where the AHTs were to communicate with the Chief Veterinary Officer but that was not happening. Council stepped in and made sure that facilitation process took place.

So that is our role, is to make sure that the facilitation takes place, and if this is an issue then we would like to speak to the AHTs about their career paths and the OSDs; and everything else and we will make sure that, that does happen. W must make certain that the different professions practice their professions with dignity, and we will definitely carry that forward, but we need that in writing so that we can facilitate the process. Thank you very much.

**Anthea Fleming:** Okay, there was a question at the back.

**Unknown:** Thank you. I think one of the biggest issues we are facing, is if you look at the history, that we have two economies, veterinary services is also at the centre of it. And that is why even if you look at the demographics of state- versus private veterinarians they actually speak volumes and from that perspective we are already divided. One of the things that I had to learn the hard way personally is that we do not even know how to play politics and unfortunately politics are at the centre of it all in terms of resources.

And until, I agree with the notion to say that we have to be united. Then we will have much more relevance, because I think we, in terms of this country, are we relevant in many of these industries that we serve? That is a question that we should ask. Are we solving African problems in this country or is it something else?

And that is where we are losing it, I believe, because even if you look at
the number of vacancies that are being talked about here, which should concern Council, because those vacancies that are being mentioned, these are potential veterinary positions that could be helping the professions; and that, in itself, is a problem. From the CCS perspective you see that when you expose most of these veterinarians that have never been in these areas that are poor resourced, it then changes their thinking.

Which, I think can be a start for most of our private veterinarians. You need to come and see what is exactly happening there. I tell you, you will come up with a different perspective. Then we will have one who can speak with one voice and then I am sure we can deal with our problems, because as it is, where ever we are going to go we are still very divided.

So that transformation is very urgent. Thank you.

Anthea Fleming: Thank you for your comment, I agree completely.

Unknown?: Thank you. I want to slightly disagree with you. I do not know how we are going to work with government as an employer. Yes, government is responsible to employ technicians, but there is this requirement for us to be registered with Council. Now how then do you put that requirement, where does that requirement come from and we then struggle with all these issues that Kenny has listed and we then say no, government as the employer must deal with these issues?

The SAVC is only responsible for other things. There is a disjuncture there that I am struggling to understand it.

Anthea Fleming: Thank you for your comment. I think it was quite clear that Dr Mawick corrected me and said that actually Council could facilitate problems. I did say that Council is aware that we need to support all the para-veterinary professions as well as the veterinary profession and Dr Mawick did actually point out that we do that and we do stand and mediate when it is necessary.

He has obviously been here longer than I have and I was not aware of that, so I apologise for that, but just for clarity, Council does stand in and mediate when it is necessary and has done so in the past and will continue to do so in the future.

The point is though that we need to have concerns presented well and presented in writing, otherwise we cannot do anything with them. So just as an add on, but it is our place.

Anne De Vos: Sorry, there is something that did not come out quite clearly, it is that AHT need to register with the SAVC and need to work under veterinarians, it is a prescript of the World Animal Health Organisation [OIE] to which South Africa is a signatory. We need to do
as they say and we cannot unilaterally decide that whatever para-veterinary professionals can do on their own or do their own thing without really motivating to the OIE to change their stance on that.

So that is why we are taking time and that is why we are doing proper research to be able to motivate to the international body why we want to change our Act. We can change our Act. It will take time, but we can do it. But we do not have the mandate to change international laws which affect our trade and all that. Thank you.

Anthea Fleming: Thank you. Thank you Teresa?

Sr Theresa Lotter: Okay, it is just changing the topic so slightly. That what I want to say sort of goes hand in hand with what Dr Anne de Vos just said. It is a challenge to all the para-veterinary professions including my own profession that when we look at changing the rules it is not just drawing a line through it and then it is a free for all. I challenge each and every para-veterinary profession here today to come up with guidelines for their own professions under which they can work independently.

The guidelines were asked for and it is not been coming forward to Council. We cannot progress on the review of the rules for the para-veterinary professions unless we get properly motivated business plans that says these are the circumstances that we want to work under, these are the rules that will apply and these are the minimum standards that will apply.

Unless that comes forward from all the para-veterinary professions this Council cannot move forward on that.

Anthea Fleming: Thank you Teresa.

Unknown: Good afternoon. I am sorry we have to come this far, but from where I am coming from I believe one way of solving the problems that we have is that if we can have one directorate nationally.

Anthea Fleming: I think that has been suggested.

Unknown: Just to highlight, where I am coming from, my state veterinarian cannot go out, because there is an argument between the manager and him about who is the boss. They cannot sign his itinerary. Just another example, not wasting time, if you come back from work 00:00 it is like you cannot manage your things, but you cannot leave your farm if you are there to offload buffalos but the buffalos are not there.

If you are driving a GG it can be impounded. So it gives you a problem. Unless we have one national directorate that understands that when you are going to do buffalo work you have to be there early and there are chances that you might come back late. Then we will have one understanding, because your manager will tell you I want you there. Your
veterinarian cannot tell you, because he is superior than him that is as far as the structure is concerned in our province.

So please, unless we have one national directorate that understands the situation we are facing in the field we are still going to have problems.

Anthea Fleming: Thank you.

Thireshni Chetty: Anthea I just have a few comments. With regard to divorcing the HR function from the SAVC as a regulatory body, I think we all have to realise that we work under many legislations and the SAVC is not an umbrella legislature. Okay, we have other legislations that guide how we practice.

So when it comes to things like line function etcetera the SAVC cannot really get involved in that, because that is an HR function. Then with regard to the OIE and its legislation, it is only in respect of trade, world trade. The OIE is not prescriptive, it does not enforce legislation, but what it does do, it gives countries a sort of sense of harmonisation with regard to trade between different countries.

However, the legislation within different countries like South Africa is specific to our particular unique needs within our country for disease control. So we have to get that right and we need to understand that.

Anthea Fleming: Thank you Thireshni.

Unknown: Thank you. Maybe just to add to what Thireshni was saying. She is correct, the OIE is not prescriptive but they are a little bit prescriptive. I have been in the OIE for the past ten years so I kind of know what is going on in the OIE. The only thing that they are prescriptive on is to say in terms of for instance foot-and-mouth disease your certification needs to be signed by veterinarian.

I have never heard any discussion in the OIE to say but an AHT may only do this or may not do this. There are no such discussions in the OIE. The OIE specifically states what a veterinarian must sign off; and what your chief veterinarian in the country must sign off.

I know China for instance at one stage put the proposal forward that they got a narrow grouping, I cannot even remember what they are called but also para-veterinary grouping, they put a proposal to the OIE to say but can these people sign off on FMD certificates and the OIE said “no”, it will be signed by veterinarian.

That is the only discussion in the past ten years in the OIE in terms of what a veterinarian may do or may not do, who must certify things and that was always a veterinarian. So in terms of the scope of practice there was never ever a discussion in OIE in terms of scope of practice of your para-veterinary personnel in the country, never ever.
So I think and that is important and I want to propose it today, because if we are sitting here today and we are having all these discussions on mandate, I want to propose today that our next Indaba is about our mandate. What exactly is the mandate of SAVC versus the mandate of DAFF?

Because DAFF does not regulate the Veterinary and Para-veterinary professions Act. DAFF controls the Animal Diseases Act. They have a completely different mandate. So in terms of how buffalo must be tested that is part of DAFF, but in terms of the scope of practice of people that is SAVC. So I think it is very important and if you bring it back to the presentation.

If we cannot sort out the “why” it does not help we start with strategy and structures and everything else, because we have not sorted out the why.

**Anthea Fleming:** Thank you, I think that is very clear. We have had many discussions at Council meetings about what is our mandate and what is not our mandate. And I think it is very important that we get clarity on that so that we can move forward, thank you. Is there anything else?

Otherwise I am going to hand over to Clive Mawick on what topics the next Indaba should cover.