Dear Members

SUDDEN UNEXPECTED INCREASE IN MAINTENANCE FEES 2012

The SAVC has received requests for explanation of the sudden large increase in the maintenance fees and to ensure that all members are kept abreast of the developments this explanation is submitted for the information of members.

It should first be mentioned that registered members who have financial constraints can submit a motivation in writing and addressed to the Registrar with a request that a special dispensation be granted to make a down payment of the maintenance fees.

The main reasons for the increase in fees came about as a result of serious deliberations by the Council on the improvement of services to the veterinary professions. The SAVC has in the past been under subsidised to perform the level of service that it wishes to perform.

In essence the Council resolved to-

- **Restructure the staff complement:** To ensure that persons with tertiary qualifications performed the work and provide members with optimal services. Two new posts were immediately looked into and were carefully described and are now filled. Therefore it was required to immediately make provision in the budget for the re-structuring of the staff complement;

New Positions:

The requirements for the position as the SAVC’s Head of Education [HOE] are at least a tertiary qualification in humanities or languages with knowledge of the National
Qualifications Framework, the national training requirements as well as sound analytical, language and writing skills.

There are two processes that will be administered by the HOE namely:

1. Annual monitoring of subjects and each subject in all training programmes are monitored at least every six [6] years. For this purpose Council appoints experts in the relevant fields to conduct an in-depth assessment of the outline, content and outcomes of the course. These experts determine whether the training in the subject will enable the professional to practice in the particular discipline in South Africa;

2. Visitations to institutions to determine whether the school/faculty is able to present the particular course and has the capacity to do so. These visitations are held at intervals of between 5-8 years and are currently being linked to global accreditation processes. Indeed a budget has been drafted for the Visitation to the Faculty of Veterinary Science, UP in 2013 and amounts to R 454 000. Members of the team include four foreign members [funded] and two foreign observers [not funded].

The requirements for the position of the SAVC’s Legal Administrator [LA] are at least a tertiary qualification in law, experience and sound analytical, language and writing skills.

The Legal administrator will take away some of the tasks from the current Director Legal Affairs so that all outstanding legal matters can be attended to. This includes making sure that the Legal Director prioritises the Inspectorate as already agreed upon with members of the profession.

The restructuring of the staff complement has also taken into consideration capacity building, retention, succession and attrition aspects.

- **Transform all its communication:** To ensure that all data is converted into electronic format and to create interfaces for user-friendly communication between the SAVC’s data base and the website; payroll system; and other communication;

- **Marketing the professions:** Market the veterinary professions [veterinary team] internally and externally and in the process obtain recognition, from in particular the government, for the valuable services that the veterinary professions render; and

- **Review the budget:** Amend the budget to provide for all the above and especially improved services.

During the strategic planning in January 2012 all aspects relating to the restructuring and the requirements to meet the demands, including incremental increases of the fees, as well as staggered fees for younger veterinarians, were carefully considered by Council. Council, after extensive deliberations, resolved that the same service is rendered to all veterinarians and Council needed more funds immediately in 2012 to deliver improved services as soon as possible to the professions.
Background: As part of the background to the changes above please find herein below information which may shed light on the developments and some perspectives on Council’s review of matters.

Twenty – thirty years ago

- members received a copied and stapled Newsletter;
- there was no website, no Three-year Review, no Code of Conduct and Practice, no marketing material;
- there were no cell phones or cell phone messages;
- there was no CPD;
- there were very few disciplinary complaints against members that had to be investigated;
- there was no need for regular delegations to meet the Ministers of Agriculture and Environment, Parliamentary Portfolio committees about rhino horn, the Registrars of Acts 36 or 101, NQF, SAQA, Competitions Commission or Consumer Act, etc;
- the administration was not an independent administration and was administered by the then Department of Agriculture until 1982. This changed in 1982 with the enactment of the new Act;
- the administration was then administered by the Northern Transvaal Chamber of Industries as part of their duties for a group of other entities;
- in 1993 the SAVC sought its own administration and identity; and
- in 2008 it also acquired its own building at 874 Church street, Lisdogan Park, Arcadia.

When looking at price increases in registration fees, please compare these to market trends, salary increases and fees charged for clinical procedures over the years: Prices not only escalated due to increase costs, but especially also due to improved service delivery.

The required standard, the level of service required as well as the increase in what the public’s expectations are changed dramatically from what was expected even five to ten years ago from both the Council, its administration and the veterinary professions.

The Council intends to improve on all its services namely-

- **Improved turn-around times in-**
  - responses to members;
  - responses to members of the public;
  - complaints processing [both relating to lay person activities and member activities];
  - accreditation of continued professional activities;
  - inquiries.

- **An interactive website and electronic communication for-**
  - personal detail updates
  - CPD logging
  - payments
  - enquiries
- **Implementation of an Inspectorate for investigation of**
  - lay persons rendering veterinary services
  - members who contravene the various Acts

- **Services to Committees**
  - improved advice on international and national trends
  - improved support

The SAVC is a statutory body regulated by the Act, regulations and rules. Various stakeholders including the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, the South African Veterinary Association and the Faculty of Veterinary Science, UP have representation on Council. Apart from the administrative support to full Council there are:-

Ten standing committees-
- Code of Conduct and Practice Committee
- CPD Accreditation Committee
- Executive committee
- Education committee
- Fees [Guideline of Tariffs]
- Food safety committee
- Investigation committee
- Inspections committee
- Registration & Authorisation committee
- Specialisation

Council is represented on-
- The Joint Public Relations committee
- Animal Health Forum
- SAQA Professional Bodies Forum

Portfolios on Council are-
- Animal Welfare
- Finance
- Public Relations
- Stress

The staff complement servicing these committees and groups before the two new appointments above was eleven [11], increased to thirteen [13] and will maybe have to be increased to fourteen or fifteen [14/15].

The advantages for the veterinary professions to be self funded are:

- veterinary professions regulate themselves;
- politicians do not dictate how the professions regulate themselves;
- peers screen complaints;
- peers act as inquiry bodies into professional conduct;
- veterinary professions determine policies relating to their professions;
- peers evaluate standards of training and whether the training is relevant for practice;
- Council determines how it should spend its funds and controls it. Good governance can be exercised.
Independence can only be maintained if, in addition, the professions regulate themselves in such a way that the public and the animals are also protected.

- If the veterinary professions do not act in the interest of the professions, the animals and the public [for the good of all communities] then the right to regulate themselves may fall away and “politicians and lay persons” could then determine the way forward.
- The election component may not or may no longer be guaranteed.

There is a very clear distinction between the roles of the SAVC and Associations whether it is the South African Veterinary Association or the Black Veterinary Forum or any one of the para veterinary associations. It would not be in the best interest of the veterinary professions to not retain the current status quo.

The SAVC-

- determines and maintains standards of training and professional conduct.
- is in line with what is guided by the World Animal Health Organisation [OIE] as required for statutory bodies and good veterinary governance.

“The OIE has recognised the need for all Members that have not already done so to create an independent veterinary statutory body (VSB), which is responsible for overseeing the quality and professional conduct of veterinarians working in the country. An effective VSB can help to ensure the excellence of the veterinary profession by setting standards for licensing and education (both initial and continuing) and by taking disciplinary action in cases of non-compliance with licensing requirements for the veterinary profession.

Closer collaboration between veterinary education establishments, Veterinary Services, VSBs and, as appropriate, veterinary associations should be established in order to improve veterinary governance globally.

The OIE is taking steps to improve global and regional recognition of the important role of VSBs. As part of this initiative, the OIE Regional Representation for Africa held a conference on ‘The role of Veterinary Statutory Bodies’ in Bamako, Mali on 14-15 April 2011. The Bamako Declaration may be accessed here.

In future, the OIE envisages extending its ‘Twinning concept’, as successfully used to improve the competencies of veterinary laboratories, to veterinary education establishments and VSBs It is the responsibility of developed countries and international donors to assist developing countries improve their veterinary education for the global public good.”

- also comprises four veterinary para professions [only one existed in 1978] and the number of these professions will increase in time. Currently the para profession of veterinary welfare assistants is working towards becoming a fully fledged para profession.

The SAVC has through its veterinary professions the role to protect the public, animals and the professions, whilst Associations has mainly the responsibility to look after the interests of the respective veterinary profession that it represents.
The OIE website reports as follows:

“The Conference was successful in reaching its objectives:

- **raise awareness of the requirements for good governance of animal health and welfare systems and effective veterinary legislation, which covers all matters under the OIE mandate, including animal health, veterinary public health and animal welfare;**

- **provide practical guidance on how OIE Members (particularly developing countries) can mobilize governments for:**
  
  o **modernizing national veterinary legislation in line with OIE technical standards and guidelines,**
  
  o **educating veterinarians in the public and private sector on their role and responsibilities according to the national legal framework and,**
  
  o **promoting the key role of veterinary statutory bodies in implementing critical components of veterinary legislation.**

We trust that the information above will address your concerns regarding the sudden large increase in fees. Kindly also read page 5 of the SAVC’s Newsletter 68 of March 2012.

Please also note that the main budget votes are available to the veterinary professions on the SAVC’s website at [www.savc.org.za](http://www.savc.org.za) and you have to login as a member for this purpose. However you can also request a copy by email addressed to savc@savc.org.za. Please provide us with your comments.

We furthermore wish to advise that we are available at any time to address any matters of concern.

Yours faithfully

Lynette Havinga

Acting Registrar