



# agriculture, forestry & fisheries

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Department:  
Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

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## **SOUTH AFRICAN ANIMAL DISEASE MANAGEMENT PLAN**

**(We preserve the health of our animals, to produce enough for  
ourselves and share with the world)**

Draft for approval

March 2015

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Chief Veterinary Officer (CVO) plays a key role in ensuring that the Strategic Plan for Veterinary services is properly formulated and acted upon. The CVO provides national leadership to ensure that South Africa's veterinary services infrastructure is positioned effectively to protect animal and human health and ensure economic development.

To improve the performance of Veterinary Services in South Africa, the current animal health management plan has been developed with the mission “to ensure that human and animal wellbeing is optimized through strategic livestock development in respect of food security, agrarian transformation and rural development, and in supporting industrial development.

The proposed animal diseases management plan follows the detailed analysis of the National Development plan (NDP), Medium-Term Strategic Framework (2014-19), Integrated Growth and Development Policy (IGDP) for Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries and the Agricultural Policy Action Plan (APAP). It builds on the priority outcomes as defined by the Constitutional and legislative mandate as well as the international conventions and guidelines of the World Organization for Animal Health (Office international des Epizooties- OIE), Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and Codex Alimentarius. The strategy aims at contributing to the increase in commercial production of communal and land reform projects as well as supporting the commercial agriculture with high growth potential while ensuring consistency with South African policies and its international commitments.

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# SOUTH AFRICAN ANIMAL DISEASE MANAGEMENT PLAN

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# SOUTH AFRICAN ANIMAL DISEASE MANAGEMENT PLAN

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## 1 VISION, STRATEGY AND CORE VALUES FOR VETERINARY SERVICES IN SOUTH AFRICA

### 1.1 Vision

A science based, socially responsive and coherent veterinary services that manages disease risks associated with animals, their products, welfare and food safety

### 1.2 Mission

Promote the wellbeing of animals and humans through extensive capacity building, research, consultation and partnerships transformation

### 1.3 Core Values

- Professionalism
- Responsiveness
- Inclusiveness

## 2 DEFINITION OF VETERINARY SERVICES IN SOUTH AFRICA

In the context of this plan, veterinary services means a South African governmental and/ or non-governmental organisations that implement animal health, food safety and welfare measures and other standards and recommendations on the animal production value chain (farming, slaughtering/harvesting, processing). As in the Codex, OIE *Terrestrial Code* and the *Aquatic Animal Health Code*, the veterinary services are under the overall control and direction of the national veterinary authority.

### **3 PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF THE ANIMAL DISEASES MANAGEMENT PLAN**

The purpose of this animal diseases management is to provide direction for the development of a veterinary strategy based on extensive stakeholder involvement and improvement of the delivery of veterinary services (VS) to higher standards. In this manner, the plan will ensure consistency with key priority outcomes of the government of the Republic of South Africa to ensure a seamless, infallible, consistent and equal access to services across the country.

This plan charts a new direction for rendering of efficient, effective, developmental state veterinary services, supporting broader societal and governmental strategic objectives. Thus the state veterinary services would contribute incremental value to South Africa, SADC, Africa and the World. Specifically, the strategy targets to:

- 3.1 To improve on the technical capabilities to address current and new animal health, welfare and production issues based on scientific principles;
- 3.2 To acquire sufficient financial capital to attract sufficient human resources and retain professionals with technical and leadership skills;
- 3.3 To strengthen the interaction with the private sector and the other beneficiaries of veterinary services in order to stay on course and carry out relevant joint programs and services; and
- 3.4 To create / maintain an enabling animal and public health environment for the ability to access local and international markets for livestock and livestock products.
- 3.5 For South Africa's situation, it is also crucial that Veterinary Services (VS) supports all government developmental priorities.
- 3.6 To provide analytical, laboratory diagnostics Services and conduct risk analysis.

The plan builds on the priority outcomes as defined by government, the Constitutional and legislative mandate, the National Development Plan as well as the international conventions and guidelines of the World Organization for Animal Health (Office international des Epizooties- OIE), Food agriculture organization of the United Nations (FAO) and Codex Alimentarius.

The animal disease management plan supports the National Development Plan (NDP – Vision 2030) and the Medium-Term Strategic Framework (2014-19) outlines the priorities (fig 2) that must be achieved in the medium term in contribution to the long-term vision of the National Development Plan which has a vision of '*An Integrated and Inclusive Rural Economy*' by contributing to the commercial production of communal and land reform projects as well as supporting the commercial agriculture with high growth potential (fig 1) while aiming at ensuring consistency with South African policies and its international commitments. The Agriculture Policy Action Plan (APAP), which is a consensus document around a job creation strategy within Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, proposes various interventions which this strategic framework will align with, key among them is an effective and efficient biosecurity systems.

The plan will further guide the development of new policies or guidelines and will enhance existing biosecurity arrangements based on risk assessments and taking into account social, economic and ethical considerations. The plan will support the achievement of high level environmental protection and sustainable livestock farming by considering the impacts on the environment in the development of policy framework.

The implementation of the plan will encompass the entire country, including animal owners, the veterinary profession, food chain business operators dealing with animals and their products, animal health industries, animal interest groups, researchers and teachers in the veterinary and related fields, government bodies, veterinary pharmaceutical and feed manufacturers and distributors, sport and

recreational organisations using animals, educational facilities, consumers, travellers and provincial veterinary authorities.



Fig 1



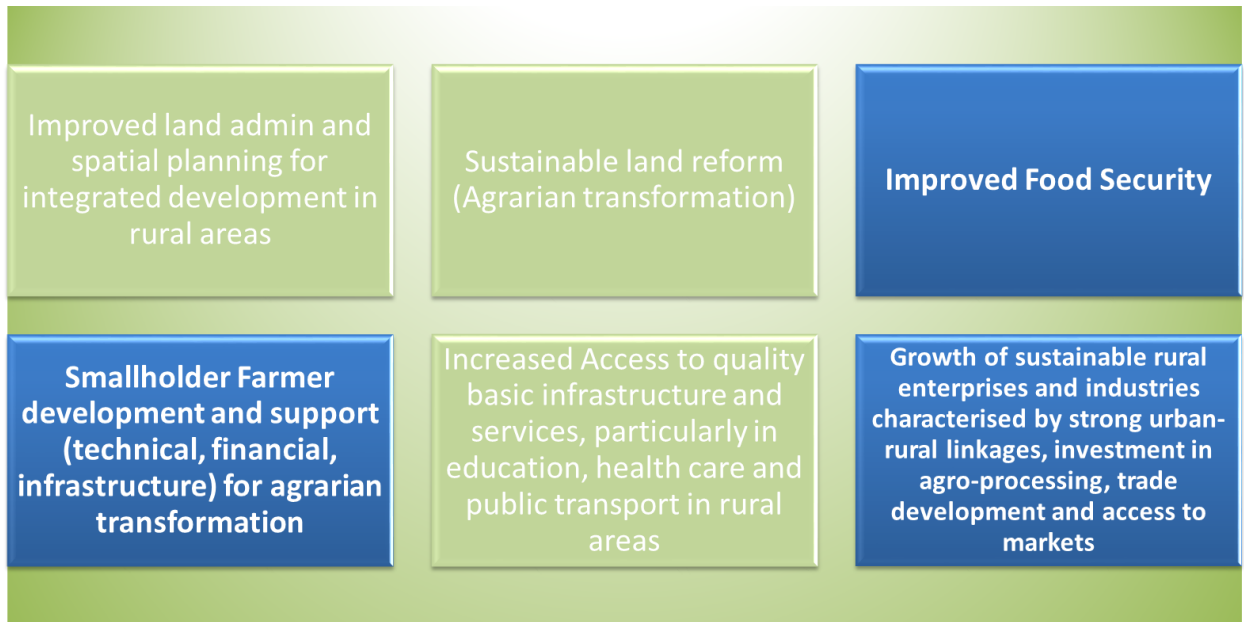


Fig 2

## 4 INTRODUCTION

### 4.1 Historical perspective and background to Veterinary Services in South Africa

The role of the veterinary profession is to promote animal health, animal welfare, public health and the protection of the environment. Before 1972 veterinary services (VS) (including academia, laboratories and research) in South Africa functioned under the umbrella and control of the then equivalent of the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (DAFF) (Bruckner G.K., 2014). The Faculty of Veterinary Science was removed from the Department after 1972 and transferred to the University of Pretoria. Onderstepoort Veterinary Institute (OVI) was disentangled from the Department in 1992 and finally the Onderstepoort Institute for Exotic Diseases in 2001. In 2002, Onderstepoort Biological Products (OBP) also became a State Owned Entity (SOE).

The above organizational restructuring processes have had some serious unintended consequences such as the decline in the quality of disease diagnostics, the decline in the output of veterinary research and the inability of the

state to supply strategic vaccines and biological products to the livestock industry, which places the country at major risk of serious animal disease outbreaks. There has also been a notable inability of the local veterinary training institutions to produce veterinarians in acceptable numbers to fill positions in rural areas. As a result, the state veterinary services are unable to fill the majority of state veterinary posts with locally trained veterinarians.

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act No. 108 of 1996) brought about further changes in the delivery of veterinary services by decentralizing the veterinary services, making it a concurrent function to be performed by both national and provincial veterinary authorities. In schedule 5 (Part A) of the constitution, “abattoirs” and “veterinary services, excluding regulation of the profession” and in schedule 5 (Part B) “municipal abattoirs” are identified as functional areas of exclusive provincial legislative competence, however the definition and scope of exclusive is not clearly defined. In schedule 4 (Part A) “animal control and diseases” is identified as a functional area of concurrent national and provincial legislative competence. Section 156 of the constitution further makes provision to assign these functions to municipalities. It is only on sections 44(2), 100 and 146 that role and function of the national authority can be identified by implication.

The constitutional arrangements assigned the national department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries the responsibility to set the norms and standards for the delivery of veterinary services, national disease control programs and the control of the import of animals and animal products. The provincial veterinary authorities were made primarily responsible for implementation and enforcement of the national veterinary services standards, thereby enabling the sanitary guarantees for both the import and export of animals and animal products, in accordance with national and international norms and standards that must be provided by the national veterinary authority to our international trade partners.

The constitutional prescripts have had an unintended negative effect in the erosion of the line of command required for an effective and seamless control of diseases during outbreaks. In order to negate this effect, DAFF and the Provincial Departments of Agriculture signed a Memorandum of Agreement which would support the implementation of the spirit of the Intergovernmental Relations Framework Act 2005 (Act 13 of 2005), however this has had limited success in ensuring efficient and effective delivery of veterinary service and the chain of command problems.

## **5 LEGISLATIVE MANDATE**

According to section 27(1)(b) of the Constitution, “everyone has the right to have access to sufficient food and water” and “the state must take reasonable legislative and other measures, within its available resources, to achieve the progressive realization of these rights”. The state guarantees the right to sufficient healthy food of animal origin through two acts which govern state veterinary services; The Animal Diseases Act, 1984 (Act 35 of 1984) and the Meat Safety Act 2000 (Act 40 of 2000). The Meat Safety Act was promulgated by Parliament in October 2000 whilst the Animal Health Act, 2002 (Act 7 of 2002), which has already been promulgated by Parliament, is envisaged to replace the Animal Diseases Act.

In addition, the Veterinary and Para-veterinary Professions Act, 1982, (Act No of 1982), as amended provides for the establishment, powers and functions of the South African Veterinary Council (the Council), a statutory body responsible for the registration of persons practicing the veterinary and para-veterinary professions; for the control over the practicing of the veterinary and para-veterinary professions; and for matters connected therewith.

To date, the welfare of animals in South Africa is regulated under the Animal Protection Act, 1962 (Act No. 71 of 1962) and Performing Animals Protection Act, 1935, (Act No. 24 of 1935). Undoubtedly, the greatest driving force for improved animal welfare is public opinion and this demand is reflected in the activities of various lobbying organizations and through the media and ultimately at policy level, through improved legislation. However, legislators have been careful to obtain scientific advice on animal welfare issues and to act within the scope of that advice. The Societies for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1993 (Act 169 of 1993) governs the organisation of the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals.

The practice in the majority of countries is for similar welfare legislations to fall under the departments of Agriculture consistent with the requirements of the World Organisation for Animal Health – Office Internationale des Epizooties (OIE). Prior to 1997, the Animal Protection Act and Performing Animal Protection Act were under the Department of Justice. Upon transfer to the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries in 1997, they were initially placed under the Directorate of Animal and Aquaculture production and not with Veterinary Services. The transfer to Veterinary Services was only carried out in 2009..

Other pieces of legislation that provide the necessary mandate for the provision of veterinary services include the Fertilizers, Farm Feeds, Agricultural Remedies and Stock Remedies Act, 1947 (Act No. 36 of 1947), the Medicines and Related Substances Control Act, 1965 (Act No. 101 of 1965), Animal Improvement Act, 1998 (Act No. 62 of 1998), Animal Identification Act, 2002 (Act No. 6 of 2002), Agricultural Product Standards Act, 1990 (Act No. 119 of 1990), National Environmental Management Act, 1998 (Act No. 107 of 1998) and the National Environmental Management Amendment Act, 2008 (Act No. 62 of 2008).

## **6 RATIONALE FOR AN ANIMAL DISEASE MANGEMENT PLAN FOR SOUTH AFRICA**

In the past few years, the country has experienced an upsurge in the frequency and magnitude of serious infectious diseases, some of which were exotic diseases (Modisane B.M., 2009). An outbreak of any infectious disease is an indicator of the failure in the disease outbreak management chain such as; lack of an early warning system which relies on effective disease surveillance and diagnostics, lack of emergency disease preparedness, and or insufficient herd immunity which rests on the ability to produce high quality vaccines and ability to get effective vaccination campaigns implemented. The increase in the frequency of the disease outbreaks in the country is therefore a concern that needs to be addressed as a matter of extreme urgency.

The traditional mission of state veterinary services in South Africa has been to protect the domestic agricultural industry. This approach has resulted in most of the resources being channeled towards the control of diseases that threatened the productivity of primary production. The focus of the veterinary services provided as is in many other countries, was from the national borders inward. The credibility of these services has been to a large extent dependent on the effectiveness of the domestic programs, schemes, and response to disease emergencies arising from the entry of foreign and controlled diseases.

In light of the massive development of the international transportation of people, animals and animal products, increased understanding of veterinary public health and food safety matters by both the international and local consumers, the changing international standards for trade, increased welfare considerations, climate change and opportunities facing countries, VS should adopt a broader mandate and vision, and provide new services that complement the portfolio of existing services (Be'net and Bellemain 2005). This will entail stronger alliances and closer cooperation with stakeholders in the livestock industry value

chain, national veterinary service counterparts of countries in the region and beyond, within the stipulations of the World Trade Organization rules.

Recent restructuring of DAFF also warrants a new approach in that fish and bee diseases must be included in the scope of work for state veterinarians. The Animal Diseases Act, 1984 (Act No. 35 of 1984) as well as the Meat Safety Act, 2000 (Act No. 40 of 2000) have to be adapted to cater for this new mandate. The training of veterinarians at both undergraduate and post graduate levels must take into consideration this new mandate. Bee diseases such as American foulbrood are now required to be reported internationally to the OIE by state veterinary services.

Despite the achievements of the past to control and eradicate animal diseases of public health, trade and economic importance, the risks for these animal diseases are still present in South Africa. During the disease outbreaks, farming and trade activities are disrupted, rural livelihoods are jeopardized, food security is threatened, scarce personnel resources are mobilized and emergency funds have to be requested from national treasury. These disease outbreaks adversely affect the implementation of many of the government priorities and international trade on some agricultural products.

The occurrence of animal diseases outbreaks results in countries that import animals and animal products from South Africa exercising their right in terms of international trade rules that South Africa must give the guarantees that animals and animal products to be exported, do not pose a risk of transmitting these diseases within the country of destination. In addition, they also request to evaluate and assess the standard of veterinary service delivery on site at a cost before accepting the guarantees provided by the country.

In the last few years South Africa have had inspection audits conducted by several countries and regions such as Malaysia, the European Union (EU), USA,

Saudi Arabia, Cyprus, Italy, the People’s Republic of China, Argentina and Brazil. Inspection audits by EU targeting different commodities have been taking place since November 2003. These inspection audits are conducted in thorough detail encompassing the assessment of public health protection guarantees and the management and control of important diseases at National and Provincial Veterinary Services levels.

Although South Africa has managed to secure some export markets, the number of commodities allowed to access these markets has been declining over the years. It is therefore critically important to restructure veterinary services so as to maintain sustainability in the delivery of veterinary services – especially in respect of veterinary public health, food hygiene, disease surveillance, disease control, diagnostic services and veterinary research. Ostrich meat and venison exports to the EU have been suspended on several occasions mainly because of outbreaks of diseases. The EU has made it clear that unless their concerns are addressed satisfactorily, there will be no guarantees of the continuance of exports to the EU in future. The concerns from other markets are similar.

The state veterinary services and the tendency to implement food safety controls driven largely by the needs of importing countries at the expense of food of animal origin intended for the local market is undesirable. This has major potential to erode the confidence of the local consumer in locally produced products. It could also lead to the prevention of access to the lucrative retail distribution chains for the small scale farm producers and processors who are unable to give the retailers guarantees on the safety and wholesomeness of their products.

## **6.1 Current Challenges**

### **6.1.1 Management of animal health**

The threat of inadvertently exporting an animal disease however remains a possibility which inevitably will have a very negative impact on the trust which South Africa would have as a reliable exporter of disease free animals and animal products. The aim of CCS and PAHC is therefore to provide small farmers

(estimated 1.2 million, owning 40% of cattle and 20% of small ruminants) with clinical veterinary services and extension.

The main paradigm shift in animal health will be in convincing both policy makers and stakeholders of the need to promote more regular contact between farmers/animals and veterinarians. This is required to increase the sensitivity and accuracy of disease surveillance, for early detection and rapid response, Official delegation can be expected to link hundreds of private veterinarians with the chain of command of the VS, acting as part-time official veterinarians for specific tasks.

There is a lack of comprehensive national programmes for the prevention, control and eradication of endemic diseases. Though the constitution supports a national response in cases of emergency, the chain of command cannot be simply and quickly restored at local level for early detection and rapid response. Future policies should also clearly define “public good” activities, that are official programmes established to control zoonotic diseases, epizootic diseases or diseases of major economic importance which need to be tackled in a common and rigorous manner, and “private good” services that benefit individuals or companies. The needs for veterinary para-professionals should be re-evaluated taking into account OIE standards and the demands for a modern VS and livestock sector.

### **6.1.2 Compliance and enforcement**

The Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries has a range of compliance and enforcement responsibilities which extend beyond veterinary services and is currently responsible for undertaking a range of traditional compliance and enforcement functions. Compliance and enforcement in the Department is currently characterized by the following:



- 6.1.2.1 It is conducted on a line function basis, which limits the potential for strategic approaches and/or optimization of current capacity.
- 6.1.2.2 Certain functions are not carried out at optimal levels due to capacity constraints, for example, inspections at ports of entry.
- 6.1.2.3 Comprehensive enforcement is limited i.e. the department has initiated very few prosecutions.
- 6.1.2.4 The focus of compliance and enforcement is reactive and based almost exclusively on traditional approaches. This emphasis does not contribute adequately to the requirements of sustainable development and policy principles of prevention of transgressions.
- 6.1.2.5 The capacity to conduct compliance, monitoring and enforcement is almost non-existent in the majority of the provincial veterinary departments which places the country and the general public at great risk.

In short, the current status of compliance and enforcement in the department does not meet the legislative requirements adequately. Therefore, DAFF needs to progressively implement a more effective and holistic compliance monitoring and enforcement system, and *inter alia*, engage in an environmental right as enshrined in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa.

### **6.1.3 Declining research and diagnostic capacity**

Prior to 1990, South Africa was amongst the leading nations in veterinary research worldwide (Bruckner G.K., 2014; Cameron C.M., 2013). Testimony to this was the accreditation of Onderstepoort Veterinary Institute by the OIE as a reference diagnostic centre for a number of animal diseases causing agents. This status is at risk of being lost because this capacity has been steadily declining and have arguably reached a tipping point.

This loss would also imply that veterinary services will be unable to diagnose emerging diseases and foodborne pathogens. This capacity is necessary for the

competiveness of South African agricultural, forestry and fisheries sectors to manage the challenges of increasing livestock productivity, getting infectious diseases and food control under effective control as the world increasingly embraces new scientific technologies and bio-economy strategies.

#### **6.1.4 Skewed delivery of Veterinary Services**

There are approximately 2500 registered veterinarians of which, about 70% are in private practice, and 70% of these are predominantly in urban small animal practice. There are about 750 registered private practices in South Africa. The level of private veterinary practice in South Africa is comparable to that of the developed countries and the scale of practice varies from one-man practices to multi-member corporate practices supported by sophisticated animal hospitals and specialist veterinary support services. Private practice is either species, or, discipline related. These include, for instance: surgeons, wildlife specialist, small animal practitioners, equine practitioners, anesthetists, pathologists, etc.

In South Africa, the current veterinary services arrangement also fails to ensure a geographically and socio-cultural representative distribution of students impacting negatively on the distribution of veterinarians between the different production systems and geographic areas. This has led some provinces sending students to be trained outside the country with possible downgrading of technical capabilities.

The breaks in the chain of command negatively affect the authority and the capability of the VS in all relevant domains (PVS analysis 2012). This lowers the level of advancement and/or is described as a weakness in many of the critical competencies of the OIE PVS evaluation. Historical policies of the previous governments of separating development have created an existing anomalous situation in South Africa.

There is a marked distinction between the needs of and services available to the urban and rural white communities, commonly considered to be the affluent part

of the South African society compared to the generically black population of the country, particularly in the rural areas and informal settlements, where the provision of these services is poor or virtually non-existent. Prior to 1994, the main emphasis of delivery of service by state veterinary service was biased towards regulatory work, except in the former homelands where there was an effort to provide some basic clinical services to the farming communities and the general public.

The new government has added a developmental role to the mandate of veterinary services which has placed an increased responsibility and budget requirement on the state veterinary services. Even in urban centres, the provision of services does not reach communities living in townships and informal settlements, something which has serious public health and animal welfare implications and negates the documented good health and social benefits which these communities could derive from owning pets. However, in some provinces, the urban population in townships and informal settlements has been receiving limited veterinary services from provincial departments of Agriculture and from animal welfare non-governmental organisations.

It is glaringly clear that accessibility, availability and affordability of veterinary services to all South Africans is skewed towards urban dwellers. This is so besides the fact that approximately 40% of South Africa livestock is in the hands of the rural communities. The opportunity to use this veterinary strategy for the upliftment of livelihoods in rural communities should be prioritized and pursued.

#### **6.1.5 Training**

There are a number of challenges pertaining to training and development of veterinary and para-veterinary professional skills and competencies in South Africa. These challenges include:

- 6.1.5.1 The tertiary education system is inadequately financed within the context of the new subsidy system.
- 6.1.5.2 The current and only faculty of veterinary science is not geared to address the diverse needs of the South African livestock sector and of Government, in addition to those sectors traditionally outside of the scope of a veterinary public good. There is a perception that the training programme is biased towards companion animals and private practice and a lack of emphasis and competency in veterinary research relevant to the development of the livestock sector.
- 6.1.5.3 Too few black matriculants entering the profession as a result of a myriad of reasons due to South African conditions of service for Veterinarians that do not compensate for the time and effort expended in getting a veterinary qualification compared to fields of studies such as legal, medical and commercials.
- 6.1.5.4 There is inadequate innovation in the training and skilling of veterinarians and veterinary para professionals in emerging and critical veterinary competence areas by the academic training institutions and Universities. The expanding requirement of day one competencies and hence the curriculum content as well as the sophistication of veterinary training and needs, make it increasingly difficult, within the allocated time, to train a person with the required scope of skills and knowledge to address the specified needs in a single programme as is currently structured.

To date, the respective academic institutions have not been able to provide post-graduate training for specialised services required by the state in a world which is increasingly becoming globalised and complex. Although it is acknowledged that the faculty of veterinary science is doing its best, the need areas are critical to the improvements needed within the country and the region for efficient and effective veterinary services.

### **6.1.6 High Personnel Vacancy Rate**

In 2009 the vacancy rate for state veterinarians was 43% and 36% at national and provincial veterinary services respectively. These vacancies covered the full spectrum categories of responsibilities of state veterinarians and technologists in the regulatory and laboratory divisions of the DAFF and in the Provincial Departments. The post establishments did not necessarily reflect the optimal numbers of employees per livestock unit as well as other emerging critical areas of veterinary science and therefore the actual deficit in numbers could have been much worse than those listed.

The FAO recommends a ratio of 1 veterinarian per 100 000 livestock units, and using this norm would result in the State requiring 253 State Veterinarians to carry out disease control, laboratory diagnostics and veterinary public health, which are the minimal requirements for a basic service. In a globalised, trade oriented world, the state service needs veterinarians for the management of international trade in animal and animal products, disease diagnostics, surveillance, risk assessments, apiculture, aquaculture, etc.

The scope of state veterinary services in modern and developmental economy is broader. There is also little or no provision made for career path and unlike with other professions on Occupational Specific Dispensation (OSD) in South Africa, there is no provision for the recognition of veterinary specialities required by the state veterinary service for efficient and effective service delivery. It is inevitable that these vacancies and lack of recognition of veterinary specialists will have a pronounced effect on the standards of services provided and contribute to the inability of the state veterinary services to execute their duties satisfactorily.

### **6.1.7 Animal welfare**

Every society needs to have a culture of caring for all animals supported by effective legislation and regulations. Animal welfare matters are not only for social considerations but are important for providing assurances both locally and

internationally for animal health and constitute part and parcel of protocols for certification for trade on animals and animal products. The Department has already identified the need to review both Acts 71 and 24, particularly to take new developments into consideration because the Acts are outdated.

Whilst DAFF desires to incorporate all guiding principles for animal welfare and those of the OIE, DAFF understands that aspects of animal welfare are understood differently by the public and some aspects are culturally sensitive. Scientific considerations will form the most important part of the new policy which will guide our legislation.

#### **6.1.8 Traceability of animals and animal products**

Unlike its trading partners and neighbouring countries (Namibia, Swaziland, Botswana), South Africa does not have an official livestock traceability system for animal disease and Food safety management that can be used in conjunction with the Animal Identification System and movement control of animals. The demand of traceability of animals and animal products is increasingly being placed on producers, processors and distributors by both local and international consumers and sanitary regulators.

#### **6.1.9 Veterinary Public Health and Food Safety**

There is general public and consumer dissatisfaction with the rendering of veterinary public health service with a perception that veterinary public health services are more skewed toward urban areas and to animal products destined for the export market. The more rural areas are generally neglected for meat inspection and other activities. The level of monitoring of use and application of veterinary medicines, pesticide, hormone and antibiotic residues is also very limited or non-existent. The disjointed legislation regulating the food industry also means that gaps exist in the safeguarding of the hygiene control of products as it traverses the food processing and distribution chain.

#### **6.1.10 Aquaculture and Bee Health**

There is significant potential to develop the aquaculture sector in South Africa and as such, DAFF has prioritized this sector. While the local abalone sector has grown to become the third largest producer in the world, the growth of other sectors, such as trout and marine finfish has been hampered in part by the lack of fish health and quality assurance services.

This lack of services in fish health extends to the lack of a national diagnostic and surveillance centre. In addition, most state veterinarians are not trained in fish health matters, neither is there specialization at post graduate level in the country. There is also a need for DAFF and Department of Science and technology (DST) to support tertiary institutions in funding post graduate training and research in fish health, harvesting hygiene. Animal health and Meat safety legislation will also need to be reviewed to ensure it addresses fish health and safety assurance issues.

#### **6.1.11 Game Farming and Trans-Frontier Conservation Areas**

The game ranching industry is a largely unsung success story that now ranks as SA's sixth-biggest agricultural sector. The past decade has seen a surge in the conversion of previously beef ranches into game farms to take advantage of booming game safari tourism and game and trophy hunting demand. A census in 1964 revealed that SA had a mere 557 000 heads of game, however this had since increased to 18.6 million by 2005. Currently, there are approximately 10000 game farms in the country and new ones are entering. The wildlife conservation movement in the SADC region has also actively promoted the development of trans-frontier wildlife conservation areas.

A number of these trans-frontier parks encroach into predominantly communal livestock grazing areas which increase the likelihood of contact between wildlife and domesticated animals. The risk of transfer and spread

of exotic diseases at this wildlife-livestock animal interface is magnified many fold. The need for a better coordinated game ranching industry and disease management would certainly appear critical given its rapid growth and scale and its emergence as a larger component of the agricultural sector.

#### **6.1.12 One Health Initiative**

The One Health initiative has assumed centre stage in the agenda of both international animal health and human health organisations, as well as national associations of both human and veterinary medicines. The track record for collaboration between the animal health and human health sectors in South Africa is very sketchy, and as is the experience in other parts of the developing world, driven largely by collaboration between interested and networking officials rather than a full fledged national initiative. This is an area where greater collaboration is required in order to address the future challenges where 80% of new infectious zoonotic diseases have a link to either domestic or wild animals.

#### **6.1.13 Veterinary Statutory Body**

Not all veterinary para-professionals in South Africa are licensed to practice and subject to legal disciplinary provisions for any professional misconduct by an autonomous Veterinary Statutory Body (South African Veterinary Council). This is evident in the case of Meat Examiners and Veterinary Public health officers.

#### **6.1.14 International Situation**

World meat production is anticipated to grow modestly by 1% in 2014 to 311.8 million tonnes compared with 2013. Growth is anticipated to be concentrated in the developing countries, which are also the main centres of rising demand.



## **7 ROLE PLAYERS**

Department of Agriculture Forestry and Fisheries;

Provincial Departments of Agriculture;

Department of Health

Department of Trade and Industry

South African Police Services

South African National Defense Force

Local Government

South African Veterinary Council (SAVC)

Veterinary academic training institutions

Agricultural Research Council (ARC)

Onderstepoort Biological Products (OBP)

South African Veterinary Association (SAVA)

Private sector veterinarians

Livestock Community

Private sector organizations

## **8 PILLARS FOR A TRANSFORMED VETERINARY STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK IN SOUTH AFRICA**

The overall aim of this plan is to improve the contribution of veterinary services to the attainment of the key priorities of government at all spheres whilst building a cohesive and effective service that caters for the needs of all stakeholders over and above improving the competitiveness of South African agriculture at regional and international and levels.

## **8.1 Pillar 1 – A strong and capable veterinary authority for better governance**

The optimal strategy is to restore the national chain of command for all aspects of the VS. Dividing responsibilities and functions between national and provincial VS authorities to inevitably minimize loss of information, inability to react promptly and inconsistency in the implementation of veterinary activities.

The central veterinary authority will be driven by delivery of veterinary services as a public good and will have clarified roles and responsibilities of different spheres of government and other strategic partners. In line with trends worldwide and in recognition of scarcity of resources and the many competing needs which government faces, the central veterinary authority needs to:

- 8.1.1 Re-organize the organizational structure to ensure that all the aspects of VS are coordinated under the same authority at central level
- 8.1.2 Seek and nurture partnerships to ensure that all stakeholders contribute towards the common nation building vision.
- 8.1.3 Support the establishment of a veterinary training system for veterinarians and para- veterinary professionals to be officially delegated.
- 8.1.4 Establish specific communication tools to target all categories of stakeholders, especially non-commercial farmers.
- 8.1.5 Develop a system of official delegation to private veterinarians to increase the capacity of the VS.
- 8.1.6 Clearly define “public good” activities, that are official programs established to control diseases of major economic importance and “private good” services that benefit individuals or companies.

## **8.2 Pillar 2 – Addressing societal needs through improving access to veterinary services**

Veterinary services aim to create market opportunities for small scale farmers and small and medium food business operators who are willing to compete and meet the regulatory sanitary requirements and standards of performance required by

global markets. In this regard, it will assist in aligning the value chain to market needs thus improving the efficiency and competitiveness of the rural subsistence farmers and food business operators through:

- 8.2.1 Introduction of compulsory community service for veterinarians and other para-veterinary professionals
- 8.2.2 Introduction of primary animal health care programs especially in poor resource communities.
- 8.2.3 Improve on veterinary extension services
- 8.2.4 Create a network and improve the contribution of private practitioners in all government programs especially in the resource poor communities

### **8.3 Pillar 3: Scientific ability to undertake effective disease investigation and reporting**

- 8.3.1 Create an environment that encourages formation of disease surveillance networks
- 8.3.2 Collect accurate animal census data
- 8.3.3 Enhance of a functional disease diagnostic service and research capacity
- 8.3.4 Rationalization of the multiple laboratories in some provinces
- 8.3.5 Support the enhancement of veterinary training system for veterinarians and para- veterinarians
- 8.3.6 Improve the contribution of private veterinary practitioners in all government programs
- 8.3.7 Coordinate response to animal disease incursions including relevant stakeholders.
- 8.3.8 Appointment of dedicated staff dedicated to risk analysis at central and provincial levels.
- 8.3.9 Risk analysis and Communication
- 8.3.10 Improve epidemiological surveillance and early detection.
- 8.3.11 Veterinary Medicinal Products and biological
- 8.3.12 Establishment of a functional disease diagnostic service and research capacity

## **8.4 Pillar 4: Access to markets and food security**

- 8.4.1 Identification and Traceability of livestock and livestock products
- 8.4.2 Improve animal welfare activities
- 8.4.3 Enhancement of a functional veterinary public health system (annexure)
- 8.4.4 Realignment of food control systems
- 8.4.5 Export and Import Control
- 8.4.6 Feed Safety
- 8.4.7 Establish an Auditing and Enforcement Unit to ensure effectiveness and to increase efficiency

## **9 SOUTH AFRICAN VETERINARY STRATEGIC APPROACH**

Although a country approach to veterinary services is already emphasized above, it is important to note that various models are available which could be explored to improve the effectiveness of Veterinary services in South Africa. These vary from complete central control to full devolution of power to provincial or municipal spheres. The current strategic framework proposes ways forward to overcome the challenges in organization of the VS and recommends the development of clear implementation strategies for the next five years and more.

### **9.1 Hybrid approach**

This will be a combination of centrally controlled and federal approach. Whilst, it is generally agreed that the international community recognizes a hybrid approach to veterinary services, conditions specific to the country need to be taken into consideration as well as the constitutional implications.

The additional national veterinarians could be placed in provinces over and above existing veterinarians in the provinces, additional specifically to conduct audits on behalf of the national government. These veterinarians would report to the Chief Veterinary Officer. The advantage of this approach would be that it would satisfy

concerns related to compatibility with the constitution and also the international acceptability and recognition. However, there could still be complications with regard to effective supervision and breakdown in the chain of command.

## **10 IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORK**

The main objective of this section is to define the broad implementation framework. Detailed implementation strategy will be supplementary to this framework and will be developed at a later stage.

The implementation of this strategic framework will encompass the entire country, with stakeholders and participants expected from the following sectors: Domesticated animal owners; The veterinary profession (private and governmental); The animals and animal products industry; Veterinary pharmaceutical industry; Veterinary and related fields research and academia; Other Government departments; Animal feed manufacturers and distributors; Animal sport and recreational organizations and meat consumers.

### **10.1 Conditions for successful implementation**

This strategic framework is intended to support the development; implementation and monitoring of sanitary risk management strategies and other sanitary measures covered in the scope. The effective and efficient implementation is the primary responsibility of the Department of Agriculture executive management together with the respective provincial structures. Strong political will and commitment to the veterinary strategic framework by all the respective national and provincial departments and key stakeholders through alignment with national and provincial policies, strategies and programmes is a prerequisite.

Sufficient funding provision from national treasury and establishment of a strong monitoring and evaluation system are necessary tools. The execution of the legislation will need to be aligned with other relevant national laws and or

standards. It is important for provincial Veterinary Services, to realign their function as closely as possible to the selected approach in this strategic framework for national uniformity. The implementation should also highlight regulatory and developmental functions.

## **10.2 Financial instruments**

The financial resources and other capabilities in the private sector will be harnessed through an agreed cost sharing formula for deployment in disease control and veterinary public health as well as mentoring of small scale farmers in good farming practices so as to facilitate their smooth transition into profitable commercial production. Academic institutions will also be roped into the partnership for capacity building of both small scale farmers and extension officers.

The levels of funding and types of resources, staffs compliments will be defined in the national are shown in supplementary report attached (OIE gap analysis report, 2014). It is recommended that the budget of veterinary services be centralized for all defined national functions and then distributed through the national office to provinces according to the Veterinary activities of national importance. The strategy will be operationalised in line with the overall national budgets of Veterinary services.

## **10.3 Institutional and corporate governance structures**

In order to fulfil the requirements of this strategy and other national strategies, additional personnel (specialised, skilled, semi-skilled, and administrative) will be needed at both national and provincial levels. The Veterinary Services in South Africa is fragmented and broad restructuring system is recommended. An efficient and effective central veterinary authority operational structure that extends to provinces on specific functions is needed in order to give direction of command and responsibility. The veterinary strategic framework therefore proposes the creation of an integrated line veterinary function that will amalgamate the different

departmental entities responsible for veterinary services taking cognisance of the farm to fork approach.

The hybrid approach is the preferred method. In the hybrid, the Chief Veterinary Officer (CVO) has jurisdiction and direct responsibility for all veterinary services activities that are of economic interests in a province or country as a whole and prejudicial to the livestock and public health.

It is proposed that the hybrid structure be flexible and operative at three levels namely: national, provincial and district/site levels depending on the functional areas with each level having its own distinct functions. The central veterinary authority will carry all the functions that are of national interest and the province will carry out all other relevant functions. In special circumstances, provinces will be requested to sign Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) and Service level Agreement (SLA) to execute certain functions of national interest on behalf of the central veterinary authority.

Responsibilities for the CVO will be to provide national leadership to ensure that South Africa's animal and veterinary public health infrastructure is positioned to effectively manage current and emerging disease threats in order to protect animal and human health.

The CVO will liaise with the Head of Food Protection/Biosecurity in the Department of Health whose responsibilities are to provide expert advice to food safety program design and regulatory biosecurity policy development in South Africa which takes into account evolving and emerging food safety risks, global trends and best practices. The position will also provides executive leadership in collaboration with CVO and other relevant Departments in the management of national and international food safety emergencies to maintain international trust in South Africa's inspection and certification systems in support of market access.

The proposed overall staff compliment for the restructured veterinary services is shown in supplementary report attached (OIE gap analysis report, 2014).

## 11 REFERENCES:

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