

**THE MEANING OF RECIPROCITY: A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE
IS THERE A NEED OR CASE FOR THE CONTINUANCE OF
VETERINARY RECIPROCAL ARRANGEMENTS (RECIPROCITY)
WITH CERTAIN COUNTRIES BY THE SOUTH AFRICAN
VETERINARY COUNCIL?
AN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE IN RELATIONSHIP TO PAST
EXPERIENCE, EQUITY, ACCESS AND POSSIBLE FUTURE
PROBLEMS**

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IMPORTANT NOTE

This paper was researched for the South African Veterinary Council by the researcher in 1998 and therefore, captures an important part of South African history under the apartheid government, in perfecting its policy of exclusion of black veterinary professionals in the country, given credence by a group of white professionals that served on successive boards of the South African Veterinary Council and, thus compromised their professional standing and integrity, by not being vocal against the apartheid state, and maintained the racist status and policies of apartheid, in spite of taking the veterinary oath to uphold the principles of justice, fairness and equity. This contributed to the exclusion of black veterinarians being unable to practice in South Africa, in spite of them being citizens. This is therefore, an important part of South African professional history, and therefore, the dynamics of this exclusion and history must be captured for posterity. The author of this article served for ten years on the South African Veterinary Council, as a co - opted member, during the time of political negotiations and also after the first democratic elections in South Africa, post 1994. He was the first black South African veterinarian, who qualified in Bombay, India through an African National Congress Fellowship by agreement with the United Nations Development Programme and the Government of India. He was also the first veterinarian to be registered by the Council in 1979 under the 1933 Veterinary Act, and was appointed by the African National Congress to negotiate a settlement with the apartheid state, the South African Veterinary Council and the South African Veterinary Association, to this vexing issue.

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SUMMARY:

This paper or discussion document attempts to explore in an historical perspective, the meaning of reciprocity. Reciprocity is used as a term or arrangement for the recognition of an entire composite group of, a countries veterinary institutions by a registering statutory veterinary authority, generally with or without a visitation process. There will thus be a reciprocal arrangement on this basis between two statutory governing bodies. Generally, if only some of the veterinary institutions within the composite group are recognized for purposes of

registration of a veterinary qualification, such registration is recognized, in terms of the limitations imposed by the veterinary statutes of a country for that particular veterinary institution(s) within the composite group, for purposes of automatic registration without further examination.

In this regard and strictly speaking therefore, the word reciprocity or reciprocal arrangement refers to the acceptance and recognition of all the veterinary institutions in a particular country and vice versa, by arrangement between the two statutory institutions. The fact that currently the Royal College only recognizes one veterinary faculty in the context of South Africa, from the composite group of South African veterinary institutions, it does not have a reciprocal arrangement with the South African Veterinary Council. However, it must be pointed out that the Royal College and the former South African Veterinary Board entered into a formal reciprocal arrangement under the repealed Veterinary Act of 1933. The arrangement historically with the Veterinary Registration authority of New Zealand, in respect of Massey Universities Veterinary Faculty and the South African Veterinary Council, in respect of the University of Pretoria's faculty of Veterinary science is and was a reciprocal arrangement. This recognition was based on the fact that both countries at the time of the agreement had only one faculty each, and that the arrangement did not include a visitation process to determine equivalence of academic standards.

On the other hand the South African Veterinary Council makes its own rules and has chosen to recognize all six (6) veterinary institutions within the United Kingdom as a composite group and which are accepted and recognized by the Royal College for automatic registration as Home Universities. This acceptance by the South African Veterinary Council may therefore, be termed as a reciprocal arrangement between the individual faculties of the United Kingdom and on the basis of ratification and acceptance by the Royal College and, as such constitutes a reciprocal arrangement for purposes of automatic registration and practice in South Africa of all United Kingdom veterinary faculties. The word reciprocity and automatic registration although strictly speaking are not the same as outlined above, the words (reciprocity, reciprocal arrangements and recognition) will be used interchangeably, due to the very subtle differences, relating to semantics, which poses problems in respect of interpretation. The crux of the matter is basically therefore, the issue of automatic registration and acceptance of certain foreign qualifications by the South African Veterinary Council without further examination. Having clarified the position from the outset, it is obvious that such arrangements impact and have impacted upon the veterinary profession of South Africa and, it is in this context that the paper will examine the issue under discussion.

It would also attempt to explore reciprocity on the basis of equity, access and possible future problems. In doing so arguments will be presented to cover a host of inter-related variables and certain recommendations will be made. The writer hereof, acknowledges that, reciprocity or reciprocal arrangements are entered into for different purposes and therefore, naturally fit into the realm of differing circumstances, settings and conditions including political intervention. It is on this basis that the paper would in the main, respond and very largely confines itself to veterinary reciprocity or reciprocal arrangements in relations to the veterinary question in South Africa and to a certain extent during the post 1994, democratic period.

The historical perspective was chosen simply to capture and emphasize the basis of former or past recognition agreements of this nature which were politically motivated, and applied on the basis of race and certainly not on the basis of equivalence of standards. Very importantly to also advise that political intervention must therefore, be kept at bay currently, and in the future, if the

Veterinary Profession of South Africa is to be protected and, the autonomy of the South African Veterinary Council is to be preserved. On the other hand, the writer acknowledges that, his own subjective predilections may intrude upon the views of others against testable hypotheses. This is and was totally unavoidable.

INTRODUCTION

Veterinary Boards/Councils as statutory bodies, approved by governments, the world over are empowered by legislation to regulate the veterinary profession by making laws, rules and regulations, in order to maintain minimum standards, in respect of all academic and practical issues that affect the veterinary profession and, to regulate the standards of training offered at veterinary institutions in various veterinary disciplines, as they pertain to respective individual countries, thereby, allowing individuals who have undertaken requisite training in any veterinary discipline to register as veterinarians or para-veterinary professionals, in order to practice the art and science of veterinary medicine and surgery or any allied field of study. In so doing and as professional institutions, representing the profession, they must at all times be neutral and are charged with the responsibility of upholding the highest integrity of public office.

Generally, as a rule there are no reciprocal arrangements between statutory veterinary institutions (Boards/Councils) of different countries. The position is limited by appropriate legislation for example, in the United Kingdom, by the Veterinary Surgeons Act 1966 and, in the Republic of South Africa, by the Veterinary and Paraveterinary Professions Act 1992, or as the case may be in any other country. In this regard there is no reciprocal arrangement between the Royal College and the South African Veterinary Council. Governing bodies of various countries, make their own rules, and therefore, the South African Veterinary Council has agreed that the Membership of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (MRCVs), who have obtained their degree from one of the six United Kingdom Universities (Bristol, Cambridge, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Liverpool and London Universities) may practice in South Africa without further examination. The governing body in the United Kingdom, which is the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons has no such rules. The only veterinary surgeons from South Africa who may register automatically with the Royal College are from Pretoria University, who have taken their primary veterinary degree at this university. The fact that South Africa had only one faculty at that time, it can be considered a reciprocal arrangement (Reciprocity) on the basis that, the only faculty in South Africa was recognized by the Royal College as a composite group of faculties (in South Africa) and, in turn the six (6) United Kingdom institutions referred to above were recognized as a composite block by the South African Veterinary Council and the former South African Veterinary Board (there may have been others).

It is however, interesting to note that not all the United Kingdom Universities had opened their doors at the same time and that not all universities were recognized at the same time, but were recognized over time, without a visitation process and which ought to have been reviewed accordingly over time. Whilst in the case of South Africa, its predominantly Black Veterinary training institution, (Which was located at the Medical University of Southern Africa (Medunsa) Pretoria – It is now closed) had produced successive graduates, but remained unrecognized for purposes of automatic registration with the Royal College. The Veterinary faculty at Medunsa was officially commissioned in 1980 by the then South African government, and officially opened its doors as South Africa's second veterinary faculty in 1982 and to have produced more than 60 Black Veterinarians.

Against this background, the question arises given the history of the relationship between the Royal College and the South African Veterinary Council, the high standards of veterinary training in South Africa and, the fact that academia by and large at the Medunsa Faculty (The Black Faculty) were drawn from the University of Pretoria, testifying to the level and quality of training, not facilities because they develop over time and, in spite of successive investigation/visitation teams from the Royal College – The question arises as to why the Royal College had not accepted the qualification of this predominantly Black faculty for purposes of automatic registration? (It must also be noted that generally when there are only a few faculties in a country, there are automatically recognized, and once a qualification/degree is accepted by one registering authority, with or without further examination and, even if such qualification is from a foreign university, the bona fides of the registration authority is accepted or upheld by virtue of its standing, knowledge, integrity and long historic relationship thus allowing an individual to move to and fro in order to practice as a veterinarian without any let or hindrance, and above all without further examination. This has however not occurred in respect of New Zealand, the Royal College and South Africa, in respect to the faculty at Medunsa and/or any nation of colour worldwide).

Although it is the prerogative of the Royal College and the New Zealand Veterinary Council and any other statutory body to do so, it perhaps could be stated that the bona fides of the South African Veterinary Council may have been questionable, in articulating the case of Medunsa on the basis of standards and its historical relationship with the Royal College and, New Zealand might therefore, be construed as wanting to have maintained the status quo because of the policies of apartheid and, may have compromised and, in actual fact did compromise, the position of the Council, in the eyes of the majority of South Africa's population, but more importantly among some veterinary constituencies and some academia in South Africa, and questions may be asked by politicians serving within the Government of National Unity (GNU), at that time.

What is in question in the context of South Africa is the fact, that the country has only two faculties and there is no need to believe that there will be a proliferation of veterinary institutions, particularly when one considers the possible amalgamation of the two local faculties in the medium term. It also raises the question of equal but separate education. Implicit in this may be an historical bias racial connotation and therefore, poses a very serious dilemma in relationship of the standards of veterinary training at the Medical University of South Africa's faculty of Veterinary Sciences particularly on the part of the South African Veterinary Council and similarly the Royal College and the New Zealand Veterinary Council, who are by their statement of non-recognition of the Medunsa degree, are not as yet convinced with the standards of training at this faculty. In this regard a categoric statement has to be made by the Veterinary Council of the Republic South Africa.

THE CONCEPT AND MEANING OF RECIPROCITY

What then is reciprocity? Often times one is apt to cloud the issue with various interpretations and this therefore, has the potential of exacerbating the intellectual debate in respect of spurious arguments, often based on unnecessary emotion. In order to avoid this situation, it becomes vitally important to understand the term reciprocity or rather the meaning of reciprocal arrangements, in the context of the clarity alluded to in the summary of this paper, but particularly and more importantly in the historical milieu of South Africa and South African politics.

The word reciprocity derives from the Latin word *reciprocus*, meaning to and fro, but in actual fact from the term or word *reciprocal* (an adjective) and, is therefore, an expression relating to expressing a mutual relationship or a function so related to another, such that their product is unity. Other words that derive or emanate are – *reciprocate* – meaning give in return or give and receive mutually, or interchange of privileges, as it relates or translates to the concept reciprocity. On the other hand, the word *privilege* means right, advantage or immunity, belonging to a person, class or office. In other words a special benefit invested with a privilege. The word *advantage* means superiority in the context of reciprocity, when one considers the issue under scrutiny in its historical perspective. Simply put to derive benefit or favour by advantage and superiority over others. In relationship to the above, the word *immunity* assumes significance. The word *immunity* derives from the Latin word *immunis* (immune) meaning exempt from or proof against a charge or duty (in this case immunity or exemption from further examination for the purposes of registration as a veterinarian or para-veterinary professional). In short freedom or exemption.

PART I

THE HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE AND FURTHER CLARITY

Interestingly, there was no proviso under the repealed South African Veterinary Statutes (Act 1933) allowing for a qualified veterinarian from any other country to formally appear for an examination for the purposes of registration as a veterinarian in order to practice in South Africa. There was no need to do so because the process was further regulated by apartheid legislation. Although qualifications from many overseas European countries were not recognized nor stipulated in the South African Statutes; the South African Veterinary Board and the South African Veterinary Council by virtue of discretionary powers and not academic standards allowed automatic registration without further examination. No person of colour, from these countries or any other country, was ever registered to practice in South Africa. Interestingly, although the former government had no links with communist countries, qualifications from some Eastern Block communist countries were also accepted without further examination and again limited to the White race group only.

Having delineated the word reciprocity in its fullest context and provided some explanation and interpretation, the discussion thus far indicates that, it does not categorically refer to equal standards in training or in any form of equivalence of standards of veterinary education and training or to the standards of a university academic programme in the veterinary sciences.

In further attempting to understand the words reciprocity and reciprocal, which more often than not relates and refers to a mutual relationship or a function that two parties enter into (concerning various issues and for various reasons). In this case an agreement in respect of acceptance of veterinary qualifications. The reasons for acceptance in the context of the arrangement may be due to a political understanding, during the times of equivalence, and for a variety of other reasons, for example, the exchange of ambassadors, kinship, a special arrangement due to any circumstance specifically defined, designed or accommodated, that may enhance a particular circumstance or situation, but does not mean that such an agreement is reached out of academic necessity or in anyway enhances the academic relationship. On the other hand, it is very possible that such arrangements may impact positively or negatively on the objective realities.

If one has to engage the subtle nuances of the meaning of the term reciprocity by means of definitions and explanations captured above, it becomes vitally important and more than necessary to understand the word as a collective of its meanings and interpretations and not to

view the word in isolation, due to the past history and politics of South Africa but more importantly to understand its application and implementation. The possible political connotations in the history and context of colonialism and apartheid therefore, assumes great significance.

Closer scrutiny of the word and its attendant meanings, show very clearly that reciprocity refers in no uncertain terms to a privilege, right or advantage, that is accorded to a person, class or office. It must be clarified at this juncture that, if all things being equal on the basis of the often paraded argument of standards and, in a true democracy that the former South African state espoused on the international arena and if rights, privileges and exemptions were applied in a uniform basis on the sum total of the population, without let or hindrance, which certainly was not the case until only recently, then the issue perhaps would not be under debate, in respect of the moral integrity firstly, of the former government but more importantly, the integrity of both the South African Veterinary Board and Council. The issue of person, class and office would not have entered the equation at all. However, these issues must be placed on the table for the purposes of understanding all the issues in an historical analytical framework and, with the view that selective interpretation and implementation is never again embarked upon or entertained by the custodians of statutory veterinary legislation, in democratic South Africa or any other country on a worldwide basis.

The writer hereof posits in respect of the furnished clarity that firstly, it was a privilege and right accorded and afforded to a particular person (White person), a particular class (the white class of people defined as a group in the context of the British Commonwealth and particularly the English speaking group of countries), and office refers and relates to the offices charged with implementing policy even if a set of policies are or were wrong (The Royal College, the South African Veterinary Board/Council, the former South African and British governments, and administrators within the old Commonwealth of Nations). In other words, the so-called rich tradition, and culture of British democracy was compromised very seriously by the British government and this in turn compromised the standing of statutory veterinary institutions and brought into question the professional integrity of these institutions. All of this was done under British occupation of the then Union Territory of South Africa and given credence under the auspices of the 1933 veterinary legislation and perpetuated up to only recently.

Such privilege and rights were accorded to British and White South African citizens, to automatically practice the art and science of veterinary medicine and surgery on a reciprocal basis within the Union of South Africa and the United Kingdom, without any let or hindrance, as long as the Union territory of South Africa was administratively under the jurisdiction and dictates of the colonial ruler, in the form of the British government. There were other similar arrangements. It is obvious, that such a reciprocal arrangement had nothing to do with academic standards.

Perusal of the 1933 Veterinary Act reveals that South Africa had recognized a number of other veterinary institutions in the global arena of nations. All of these institutions were European faculties. It also indicates, that when South Africa, formally became a nation and a republic, that it accepted the 1933 Act, with almost no change to the text and inserted the word republic in place of the word union. In actual fact, it perpetuated primarily a British Veterinary Act and did not find it expedient to rewrite the said act in respect of the objective realities. Further perusal of the said Act, also indicates that it was incumbent for the South African Veterinary Board and Council, under that Act to automatically register any person irrespective of race, class, colour, creed or economic status without further examination, who might have qualified from a

veterinary institution within the old Commonwealth of Nations. (This had been pointed out repeatedly since 1979 to the South African Veterinary Board and Council but to no avail).

By the same token it is important to note that the present South African Veterinary statutes were accepted and promulgated in 1982. The first registration of a Black veterinarian by the then Veterinary Board was accepted on the 24 September, 1979 amidst much controversy especially, amongst the ranks of both the South African Veterinary Association and the then South African Veterinary Board, in fact amongst the majority of White veterinarians in a totally White veterinary profession, at that time. In spite of the objective realities outlined in relationship to the above, the new Veterinary Act now introduced the requirement of South African Veterinary Council examinations, for foreign graduates and now scrapped or terminated the recognition of some of the foreign qualifications previously recognized by the then Veterinary Board, but retained the recognition of colleges in the United Kingdom and New Zealand. During this period 1979 and until the new act was promulgated in 1982, Black citizens were forced to write the South African Veterinary Board's examination, although it was not a requirement under the provisions of the 1933 Act, yet allowing a number of expatriate veterinarians from European countries to register automatically, although such degrees were not recognized under the old act and this continued for a protracted period, even after the new 1982 Act was introduced. In order to circumvent the problem of registration of White expatriate veterinarians; the concept of partial, restricted or limited registration was also introduced, firstly without examination and then with examination. This privilege in the main was not offered to South African Black Veterinarians, in spite of numerous representations. This policy brought with it untold misery upon the lives of Black citizens who had been denied opportunities to study in the country of their birth and secondly, not allowed to subsequently practice in South Africa. A fourteen year "battle" to remedy this anomalous situation continued, leading to a formal arrangement between the former government, the African National Congress (ANC), the South African Veterinary Council (SAVC) and the Overseas Medical Graduates Association (The writer was Co – President of OMEGA) and the proposed Alternative Veterinary Association of South Africa (AVASA – the writer was chair of this organization) This later lead to the historic Veterinary Attachment Programme (VAP) in order to officially allow access via full registration for those that were forced to study abroad (This has been well documented).

It must also be pointed out that at the time of political settlement in South Africa post 1990, that although it was constantly stated by the South African Veterinary Council that, it had no jurisdiction and power over the actions of the former Transkei due to the so called independence of the territory as a sovereign nation state and therefore, could not interfere with the decisions taken by the former state in allowing unregistered expatriate veterinarians to work in the state veterinary services of the former territory. This was conveniently overlooked by both the Department of Foreign Affairs and the South African Veterinary Council, in spite of the agreements entered into by the former South African Government and the Transkei before independence, that equal standards would be maintained and that the SAVC would act as the registering authority in terms of all the homelands.

African Veterinary Legislation.

Before political settlement was reached, the former Government and the SAVC took a unilateral decision and without consultation with the ANC and other formations to recognize the qualifications of these Veterinarians for purposes of restricted registration and without further examination. This was purely a political decision and cannot be equated with the Veterinary

Attachment programme (VAP), although political intervention strategies were used. This dispensation was very different based on the following grounds:-

- a) That the exclusion of citizens by birth in any form of veterinary participation within the country.
- b) That this was a special dispensation for South African Citizens (by birth) who were denied the opportunity to study in the country and who were forced to endure apartheid legislation.
- c) That the (VAP) programme saw candidates going through a one year full time veterinary programme and on ongoing evaluation process for purposes of registration and therefore, must not be misconstrued as automatic registration.
- d) That this programme and action was decidedly different for a number of reasons as opposed to the decision taken in respect to the former Transkei.

It has also to be pointed out that, at the time of the promulgation of the new Veterinary Act of 1982, a host of veterinary councilors or members of the Veterinary Board were once more appointed to serve on the new Council. In reality not much had changed inspite of the promulgation of the new act. Arrangements that compromised the Council still continued in the wake of maintaining the status quo and this too with the greatest of impunity. Very little support was also offered by the South African Veterinary Association to change the status quo.

Another anomaly that must be understood and appreciated was the fact that for the purposes of appointment as a state veterinarian within the Public Service, as regulated by the then Commission of Administration, registration with the then South African Veterinary Board and subsequently up to the mid-eighties registration with the South African Veterinary Council was not a requirement. This was changed solely on the basis that, it was pointed out by outside formations that were attempting to rectify a host anomalous situations. The acceptance of this arrangement between the government of the day, represented by the Commission of Administration, with the knowledge of the South African Veterinary Council and the Veterinary Board, including the South African Veterinary Association, had brought all these institutions into disrepute and had severely tarnished their reputation. In reality the South African Veterinary Board and Council was acting in collusion with the erroneous policies of the government of the day, and had in no uncertain terms compromised its status as a professional regulatory and statutory institution.

It must be further pointed out that the 1933 Veterinary Act, in the context of the Union of South Africa, in its initial form, barring subsequent amendments bestowed and accorded automatic registration to any veterinarian with a qualification from any country within the old Commonwealth. During this period the British were rulers of many countries in the global arena of nations and therefore, any White British subject or citizen could register and practice veterinary science either in South Africa, the United kingdom and the old Commonwealth without any let or hindrance, even if such a subject qualified outside the portals of British Home Universities.

This policy was so designed by the colonial masters, who knew that it was not possible for any member of another race group in the context of South Africa, firstly to qualify as a veterinarian in South Africa, nor obtain a veterinary qualification within the British Commonwealth, when they were the colonialists, solely on the basis that the system of veterinary education and training was so insulated under the guise of emerging apartheid philosophy and the restrictions imposed upon citizens of colour to study abroad and within the country was also further compounded by the vicious system of historically black vs historically white Universities and

the enforcement of quotas in respect to admission to certain degree qualifications, which was restricted to the Black race group only. (African, coloured and Indian)

In other words and returning to the set of definitions alluded to, it is more than obvious that the system was so designed in order to exclude those defined as people of colour, in order to have a unity of purpose amongst themselves, but more importantly to have a reciprocity between the colonial master and its White South African subjects, for the purposes of moving to and fro from the colony, in order to accommodate its citizens and subjects, who may and would have obtained a veterinary qualification from the Union of South Africa, thus affording equivalent status recognition in Great Britain on an automatic basis. The reciprocal arrangement thus provided the basis for automatic registration for White South African citizens in order to strengthen the relationship with the colonial master and was in fact designed to champion a mutual relationship, particularly for English speaking South Africans, who were still British subjects or citizens. It was on this premise therefore, that a special benefit or favour was designed on the basis of racial superiority and the process of exclusion.

A parallel in relationship to the above was also designed with regards the acceptance of medical qualifications on the context of South Africa, within the old Commonwealth, South Africa was facing an acute and chronic shortage of medical doctors to service, African, Coloured and Indian populations. The colonial master within the old Commonwealth decided to accept the medical qualifications from certain medical colleges from the then undivided India, and specifically from the following universities: Bombay, Madras, Calcutta, Lucknow, Lahore and the Prince of Wales Medical College at Patna for purposes of automatic registration in South Africa (for South African citizens only). The University of Colombo (Ceylon) in Sri Lanka was also part of this agreement. The Sri Lankan government was in collusion with the apartheid state and their graduates were allowed to work in South Africa. Indian nationals were denied entry into South African Medical institutions and denied the opportunity to work freely within the public sector to practice the art and science of medicine, because they were not South African citizens and therefore, not allowed to work in South Africa.

The recent decision to allow Cuban doctors to enter South Africa, could be equated as a similar political dispensation, but must be viewed decidedly differently. (This difference is based solely on the premise that due to the policy of exclusion by the past regime, the present government is forced to enter into this type of agreement solely to address the imbalance of the past, due to the shortages of health personnel in the predominantly rural areas. This dispensation does not apply to South African citizens as was under similar previous policy and is therefore, very different from the previous apartheid policy, nor does this policy in anyway cater for citizenship, does not allow for automatic registration and in reality is limited to contract positions for a limited period as defined by the South African Medical and Dental Council). This does not mean that it is a correct decision but an agreement due to necessity after due consultation, and a visitation process to determine equivalence standards. There is no doubt that this is also a political decision but for decidedly different reasons. The writer hereof, is not projecting on this issue no making a statement, but is merely alluding to this case as it relates to the discussion under review.

The medical scenario by agreement with India, which was occupied and ruled by Great Britain was undertaken on the basis of a political decision, in order to serve its own interest and to quell unrest situations and to stem the tide of international criticism. After the promulgation of medical statutory legislation in the republic post British rule, all of these universities were derecognized by the former South African government on a very selective basis, without

understanding the long term ramifications and implications to the health care system and, this crisis is now hampering the new South African government. It must be noted that in as much as the Indian qualifications were derecognized, the arrangements for the acceptance of automatic registration for some European countries were maintained for both human and veterinary medicine.

CLARITY IN RESPECT OF HOW RECIPROCAL ARRANGMENTS WORK AND ALSO IN THE CONTEXT OF THE EUROPEAN UNION.

In support of the arguments pursued in this discussion document thus far, the United Kingdom extended the same privilege to graduates of certain universities in the old Commonwealth, the degrees of which, after formal consideration and approval by the Royal College, are considered suitable basis, for the practice of veterinary surgery and veterinary medicine in the United Kingdom. The Universities in question are currently Massey University (New Zealand), Pretoria University (South Africa) and the universities of Guelph and Saskatchewan (Canada) and Murdoch, Melbourne, Queensland and Sydney (Australia).

From this it can be easily gathered and understood that the United Kingdom recognizes the degrees obtained from English speaking White countries only, of which it was the colonial master and primarily of those countries where its own citizens had emigrated as a settler class of people, including the Republic of South Africa with specific reference to Pretoria University. Of interest is the fact that, the South African Veterinary Board and the South African Veterinary Council up to a point, barring the Canadian faculties within the Royal College. It is amazing that no degrees and qualifications are recognized from other countries by both the Royal College and the South African Veterinary Council for purposes of automatic registration and especially from countries within the old or new Commonwealth that are not European countries. By the same token no veterinary qualification from countries of colour are currently recognized by both the Royal College and the South African Veterinary Council. This arrangement is therefore, highly questionable.

It can then be concluded with safety that, it stands to reason that the South African Veterinary Council and the Royal College to a certain degree have a "reciprocal arrangement" as to which colleges they would recognise and, inspite of the Royal College having no reciprocal arrangement with the South African Veterinary Council. More importantly, it can be concluded that the South African Veterinary Council to a large extent or almost without exception follows what the Royal College pursues, in the context of recognition of degrees from these countries with and without further examination. It therefore, appears that, the South African Veterinary Council does not use its autonomy in recognition of veterinary faculties, but recognises those automatically approved by the Royal College and, by this fact alone compromises its position solely on the basis of a totally Eurocentric biasness and on the other hand the South African Veterinary Council is making a strong statement that, it cannot exercise its independence and autonomous mandate and therefore, has to be guided by the tutelage of intermediaries.

It is the writer's contention that the question of standards do not enter the equation and, that the analytical framework being pursued is basically attempting to address the principles of reciprocal arrangements or rather, the concept of automatic recognition of certain qualifications and in no way are the veterinary academic programmes and quality of training at these institutions being questioned. This is being reiterated on the basis that, the writer hereof, has no

such brief or mandate and even if the brief included this parameter, the writer would not have the knowledge to assess academic standards at any veterinary faculty.

To further address the principle, the writer posits that political dimensions do enter the fray and in this regard the question of standards as appraised by visitations is not in question, when one specifically addresses the question of the derecognition of the Dublin Veterinary Faculty in Northern Ireland, firstly and principally by the Royal College and not based on any form of the lowering standards. The South African Veterinary Council followed suite not to recognise the Dublin faculty and in so doing did not weigh its options as an independent autonomous veterinary institution. Previously the South African Veterinary Council had accorded the Dublin faculty automatic registration status based solely on standards and as recognized by the Royal College and, by its action had thus negated the very concepts of accountability, academic independence, autonomous integrity and thus on this basis of selectivity had supported a political decision of another country and had entered the terrain of politics. This act seriously compromised the integrity and authority of the South African Veterinary Council. (who are now part, of the EC).

The Eire faculty was previously not recognized by the Royal College. The argument that may be advanced by pro lobbyists indicating that the Royal College in actual fact does not recognise European Community Faculties, but merely allows for automatic registration, without further examination cannot and must not be entertained.

This is the irony of politics and the concept of standards. Yet the United Kingdom, in the form of the Royal College, refused to recognize the former predominantly Black faculty at Medunsa, which was nearly two decades old and has produced successive graduates, is recognised by the South African Veterinary Council, affords high quality post graduate training, its standards are in all probability higher than some EC veterinary faculties or compares more than favourably. It has to date not recognised the Zimbabwean faculty and in this regard South Africa has also not done so. The question- Why is posed? Inferences can be drawn by the reader. It must be borne in mind that the Royal College being an independent regulatory institution, can recognise the Medunsa faculty in terms of the mandate of its charter, without referring the matter to its political principals, and the SAVC could do the same in respect of faculties anywhere in the world and including Zimbabwe.

In concluding the first part of the discussion document, it must be noted again that, the historical perspective was used to elaborate and articulate various positions and reasons for automatic registration in the context of the recognition of English speaking faculties and, more importantly to understand the concept of reciprocity or automatic registration. In so doing, it was important to understand and capture this historical perspective and from the writer's understanding of the issue under study, in order to place all the issues on the table, such that a clearer picture is gleaned, thus allowing the South African Veterinary Council, to take an informed decision, based on objective realities, but primarily that the South African Veterinary Council does not take decisions in future that will compromise the position of the Veterinary profession of the Republic of South Africa. This historical perspective in no way attempted to open up old wounds, but must be seen as an honest attempt to understand this perspective in an historical mode and, the writer reiterates that nearly two decades ago, all of this was articulated and

documented to the South African Veterinary council, the South African Veterinary Association and the former Department of Agriculture, but did not receive any, meaningful attention.

Moving the discussion away from the historical perspective, an attempt would be made to crystallize salient issues that require serious attention in informing the debate, in respect of first considering the variables that might affect the entire process and secondly allowing those that are concerned in taking the best possible decisions, as it pertains to the issue under discussion and, lastly to find acceptable solutions towards a way forward as concerns this vexing and important matter.

PART 2

THE WAY FORWARD- LOOKING AT VARIOUS ISSUES AND PROBLEMS

AMALGAMATION OF FACULTIES

In the context of possible amalgamation of the two South African faculties of veterinary sciences, reciprocity, reciprocal arrangements and automatic registration, must be seriously viewed and or reviewed against this background. The fact that in all possibility this amalgamation will most definitely take place in the short or medium term, there is the likelihood that the new amalgamated veterinary faculty in South Africa would undergo a natural process of change (The faculties are now amalgamated). These changes would in all probability change the structure, form, ethos, curriculum, admission requirements and related variables of the new veterinary faculty. This could possibly affect any reciprocal arrangement and the concept of automatic registration, either positively or negatively (Has not affected recognition and reciprocal arrangements). It is in this context that relationships must be formed and nurtured afresh. If the name of the faculty for example would change or if it falls outside the ambit and auspices of the University of Pretoria, in all likelihood, the new faculty would not be recognised by the Royal College and other statutory institutions with whom there are current automatic registration arrangements. It would also be interesting and important to note, as to how the Royal College and other statutory institutions would view this amalgamation in respect of reciprocal arrangements and, as to whether automatic registration without further examination will be maintained they would agree to a reciprocal arrangement with immediate effect. (This has not happened).

ACADEMIC INFUSION

It may be argued by a part of veterinary academia and some members of the South African Veterinary Council that, arrangements in their current form advance the important and necessary process and requirement of the much needed concept of academic infusion. Further that the South African veterinary profession should not take a fatalistic attitude, solely on the basis that, academic infusion is of vital importance to the very process of technological advancement and, that, this might be viewed from the aspect of possible isolation of the profession in respect of international exposure, interaction and advancement. In addition it may be argued that such decisions will and can compromise the position of academia, veterinary students and veterinary education in general. In as much as some of these issues might

constitute primary motivators, there are opposite viewpoints that must be taken into consideration. Of primary importance in this regard is the role of the South African Veterinary Association.

The fact the South African Veterinary Council is a legal regulatory statutory body; it is obvious that, its role is decidedly different to the South African Veterinary Association and due cognisance must be taken of these differing roles. In this regard therefore, the Association is more than well placed and poised to play a significant role in respect of the process of academic infusion. This is exemplified by the fact that the Association has a number of academic groupings and portfolios, that encompass the broad role of the Association and therefore, its role is more than pivotal in respect of local, national and international academic infusion, a public relations role and the promotion of the South African Veterinary profession at any level. By this fact alone, it has the responsibility and more importantly the capacity to do so. On the other hand academia and the faculties in their own right also promote academic infusion and are closely associated with the SAVA.

There is therefore, no need to believe firstly that automatic registration and/or reciprocity as currently understood and agreed to, promotes academic infusion in any way whatsoever and secondly, it certainly is not the function of South African Veterinary Council. If the argument is so advanced that the responsibility rests on the shoulders of the South African Veterinary Council, then a very serious principle is being compromised, solely on the basis of socio-political and socio-economic circumstances, in relationship to veterinary training in South Africa and the very important variables of veterinary employment opportunities for South African citizens. This is a very serious and crucial aspect of the debate and has to be approached with the sensitivity that it deserves, solely on the basis that, it could have devastating effects upon South African veterinary graduates, but more importantly upon the viability and sustainability of both local and eventually the amalgamated new faculty.

THE ROLE OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN VETERINARY ASSOCIATION

In pursuing the discussion in relationship to the arguments advanced above, it must be understood and recognised, that the South African Veterinary Association, represents the sum total of veterinarians in South Africa, whether they are members or non-members, solely on the basis that it is a legitimate structure that carries with it the views and aspirations of nearly 70 (Seventy Percent- 1400 upon 2000) of all veterinarians in South Africa. Its role as an association is enshrined in its constitution and its much publicised credo, which establishes the cardinal principles of promotion of the South African Veterinary profession, both nationally and internationally. This is further strengthened on the basis that, it has established regular contact with veterinary associations throughout the world and, more recently is attempting to nurture and formalise new international contacts, proves that its role in respect of academic infusion is more than well established, in spite of the fact that it too previously had a completely Eurocentric approach.

Further, it is represented on the World Veterinary Association, produces journals of high academic acceptance and quality, has a number of academic groupings representing different academic disciplines, which are accepted internationally, contact with national and international

veterinary industry, contact with research institutions and governments; hosts, organizes and participates in national and international symposia, workshops and seminars, invites academia and participants together with key note speakers, including a host of interrelated activities, that cater more than adequately for academic infusion. Many of South Africa's academics have been accorded international recognition via the association and that, South African veterinary academia generally is very closely associated with the SAVA and its activities, together with a large part of other veterinary formations including the state veterinary services and private practitioners.

Indeed, the South African Veterinary Association will have to look at new innovative strategy and ways of promoting the South African Veterinary profession and by looking at itself introspectively, as an association, in order to further promote academic infusion.

The question must also be posed by the profession as to what benefit in respect of academic infusion does an undergraduate qualification or expatriate veterinarian contribute to this process, when by and large, these individuals bring with them a degree which is a basic qualification with relative experience and, in no way do these qualification surpass the level of training obtained at the local South African faculties, nor do they contribute significantly to the body knowledge of the science.

It is therefore, more obvious reciprocal arrangements and automatic recognition of the foreign qualifications without examinations does not guarantee any form of academic infusion but more importantly the role of academic infusion falls within the terrain of the South African Veterinary Association and not the South African Veterinary Council.

EUROCENTRIC BIAS: automatic registration and /or reciprocal arrangements have hitherto had complete Eurocentric bias and flavor with or without examinations, in recognition of international qualifications. This policy was and is insensitive to the academic culture of South Africa and the African continent as a whole, including the entire developing world therefore, does not consider the developing status of this country, which has so much in common with developing counties with a similar profile of problems and challenges.

By the same token it has also been stated and argued that qualifications from developing countries and those from outside the European nations do not cover a spectrum of academic areas peculiar to South Africa and therefore, the standards cannot be equated as equivalent. It must be noted that all the faculties currently recognized by the South African Veterinary Council have not been recognized on the basis of visitations to determine standards and facilities, but on the basis of their recognition by their statutory bodies. This is ultra vires in terms of standards. The question that is further posed-Do the veterinary syllabi of presently recognized qualifications/degrees from these countries cater for all the variants peculiar to South Africa's fauna and flora and which assume great significance for the practice of the science in South Africa? The answer is a catagoric – No. It is self explanatory that qualifications /degrees obtained or acquired from different faculties within the same country, within regions and on an international basis differ in both content and methodology, and that the marker is simply that the programme of veterinary training must not compromise the basic principles of veterinary skills imparted to students and that the graduate produced must be in a position to apply the broad principles of the professional training received and acquired. This should be the salient evaluating criteria. There has been a tendency by many European faculties particularly in the past to set standards according to notions defined by them, thus examining on

the basis of not what the student knows but, on the basis of what he does not know and, for various other reasons. In this regard South Africa is no exception. The primary motivators for evaluation/recognition and equivalence must be borne in mind and must not be based on any other criteria of fallacious arguments.

The Eurocentric bias for example excludes in large measure veterinary extension, socio-economic patterns of veterinary development, emphasizes the concentration on small pet animal medicine, and ignores the development indicators relevant to veterinary education in context of developing nations and pertinent to the advancement of veterinary services in developing nations. All of this has to be seriously considered and must not be rationalized in order to maintain the status quo. All of this therefore, calls for a proper evaluation in terms of the objective realities and must be reviewed with the seriousness that they deserve.

RECOGNITION OF QUALIFICATIONS FROM OTHER COUNTRIES AND IN THE CONTEXT OF AFRICA AND THE WORLD

Given that veterinary science has made strides in respect of its technological advancement throughout the world and that, most countries have to comply with international protocols as defined by the Organisation International Epizootics (OIE), it may be prudent therefore, to state the standards are also determined on the basis of the zoo-sanitary status of individual countries coupled with the level and quality of training and research. By the same token, it has been acknowledged that owing to persistent war in some countries, pestilence and disease reign supreme and is rampant. That professionals leave the country owing to this and many other reasons, for example, the lack of opportunity, low, salaries, poor teaching facilities, lack of funds for research, lack of basic medicine and the tools to do the job. In addition to all of this, the deteriorating economic positions of individual countries compromise disease control programmes, ushers in low morale and allows the service to collapse and, in some instances nepotism and corruption become the order for the day. That in countries where there are veterinary faculties and under such circumstances, cutbacks in budgets and a host of interrelated variables affect the levels and standard of education received. Such situations no doubt compromise disease control programmes and the general promotion of the veterinarian and science. Due cognisance of all these factors must also be considered with the attention it really deserves.

Barring all of this there are numerous faculties in Africa, Asia, Latin America, the Middle East, the Caribbean and a host of other countries besides European countries that could qualify after visitations and proper accreditation for the purposes for automatic registration, on the basis of formal agreements, based on a set of defined criteria and not on any arbitrary consideration. Having outlined a set of possibilities both negative and positive, decisions must be taken in an objective manner, in a manner that would allow for rational debate. All options must be so weighed and decisions must be justifiable and, not based on political decisions which very often compromise the profession and can cause untold problems for the country as observed and, was a reality under the former South African government policies.

To have an open door policy or a laissez faire approach would be unacceptable and this must be carefully considered. To enter into formal agreements on the basis of an open door policy will be impractical and too daunting a task, and would compromise the veterinary profession of the Republic of South Africa.

There is no doubt that the veterinary profession on a global basis is in a crisis in respect of budgetary allocation by individual governments and more so in the continent of Africa. These cut backs have serious implications on delivery and training. This is a proven fact in the context

of Sub-Saharan Africa, where veterinary services has virtually collapsed, broken down and is now considered a failure in spite of large amounts of donor money that was “pumped” in or made available in the past on the basis of diminishing budgetary allocation (the same scenario faces many European countries that have also been at war and also due to diminishing budgets). This has led to calls for the revival of the services, using the New International Economics (NIE), based on the privatization of veterinary services on a cost recovery basis in order to break the stronghold of economic dependency of the user population of veterinary services. In line with this scenario the Regional Commission for Africa at the OIE conference, held in Rabat (Morocco), February, 1995 has acknowledged given this scenario that privatization as an imperative in the context of Africa is an irreversible process, solely on the basis of veterinary survival, but more importantly because of diminishing donor funding.

Against the above realities and background, there is no doubt that an influx of veterinarians from various countries in Africa, Asia, Europe and Latin America in fact the entire world would stream into South Africa for work opportunities, based on the premise that South Africa is currently considered the land of “milk and honey” in respect of economic stability when compared to most African and developing countries. If the flood gates of economic opportunity are opened via the processes of automatic recognition for host foreign faculties, it would create chaos, impinge upon the local veterinary profession and could cause serious tension within the country.

All this must be considered on the basis of defining a coherent policy in respect of the issue of automatic recognition of foreign qualifications and based on real possibilities of an oversupply of veterinarians, possible collapse in regulatory standards, bargaining in respect of salaries, competition against South African graduates, many of whom are actually unemployed or not gainfully employed and given the diminishing amounts of disposable incomes currently available to the population including, diminishing budgetary allocation in real terms, to both the National and Provincial Veterinary Services and for a host of other reasons. Veterinary private practice and the South Africa veterinary profession as a whole is rapidly approaching a crisis state of affairs, in respect of economic survival against a host of other interrelated factors and realities. The consequences can and could be devastating and therefore, any onslaught in respect of numbers must be contained at all costs and in terms of what the profession can really accommodate and most importantly in respect of fiscal allocation by government. The writer is of opinion that past policies and mistakes must not be justified in respect of new initiatives that are required currently.

All of this requires a very careful evaluation based not on emotions but objective realities and possible consequences. A coordinated approach that would serve the interests of South Africa, its people, the veterinary profession and the national state, but more importantly safeguarding the morale, dignity and recognition of the South African veterinary professions and services as second to none, when compared to other veterinary professions and services in the context of the global arena of nations and with particular reference to the continent of Africa must be viewed and reviewed accordingly.

ACCESS AND EQUITY

In light of the above evaluation and particularly in respect of access and equity, some protagonists will argue that, because historically some European qualifications were recognized and are currently recognized automatically, that a similar opportunity be offered to certain veterinary faculties on the African continent and other facilities of developing countries. The writer hereof cautions with regards this approach for reasons outlined above. In as much as this

might be a tangible argument for various reasons , it must be borne in mind that access and equity relate to opportunities for citizens, in context of those that have been historically marginalized and in respect of access and equity based on gender dimensions and does not refer foreign nationals. That freedom and accompanying democracy brings with it a set of variables and factors that affect economic advancement solely on the basis that the same cake must now be distributed more evenly across the spectrum of South Africa's population and there, is no cause to believe that veterinary sciences and the profession will be allocated large sums of money by the government when matched against other more important priorities and challenges that confront the Government of National Unity (GNU). Democracy also brings with it a greater sense of responsibility and must allow for a greater, understanding now, than ever before.

FOSTERING RELATIONSHIPS IN THE CONTEXT OF SOUTHERN AFRICA

The only exception in respect to access and equity would be to look in a regional context at Southern African qualifications that, could be granted automatic recognition and subsequent registration. In this regard the Zimbabwean veterinary faculty could be the only candidate. However, the automatic registration of graduates from this faculty, if the need arises, should be based on a needs analysis particularly in the rural areas of the country, if veterinary services are to be provided in these areas. This will again be limited on the objective fiscal realities. If such a scenario was to be entertained, some other faculties might fit the "bill" in the context of other continents. A similar dispensation like the Cuban medical arrangement must be very carefully implemented based on a set of criteria, If it comes to such a situation then, such practice must be confined to the state services, for a contract period only and the period of contract must not be considered for purposes of permanent residence and or citizenship. Such arrangements would have to be confined for a specific purpose and that such a dispensation would not be for the purposes of private practice.

More importantly, it would be wise to strengthen exchange at a level of research, exchange of academia for a limited period or permanent appointment into these categories, based on needs, but also on a contract basis for a specified period of time. Academic infusion via the South African Veterinary Association is the route to be considered, rather than automatic registration. Again the real danger of opening the flood gates looms high. This too must be very seriously considered before any decision is taken.

COSTS OF EXPATRIATE (FOREIGN) EMPLOYMENT IN RELATIONSHIP TO LOCAL TRAINING

South Africa's new democracy has to be consolidated by means of a sustained and accountable professional and technical service at all levels and particularly, in a host of scientific and related fields. There is no doubt that due to policies of the past, the country has been compromised very seriously and this was based on the erroneous concept of race. Previous bad policies have placed tremendous responsibility and accompanying pressure on the new state, in respect of delivery and success of the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) and development in general. Similarly, all of this has also to be considered against the real background of a lack of infrastructure particularly in the rural periphery, were these services are most required and therefore, the new government is and has been called upon to meaningfully intervene. This lack of infrastructure in both peri-urban and primarily rural areas has failed to attract local professionals to these areas even when incentives have been offered together with poor salaries offered to such professionals exacerbates the situation.

This is further complicated by all embracing fact that the former state had no policy in respect of training and educating sizeable numbers of science professionals and therefore, the country runs a serious risk under the new government of maintaining the status quo, if innovative strategies and policies are not formulated and implemented to stem to tide of non-delivery and access to essential services. Considering that the state has no policy in respect of a compulsory programme of service for both expatriates who are allowed to receive their professional education in South Africa and particularly for South Africans in respect of service and training in certain science based fields, on a need analysis. The position can be expected to deteriorate even further and therefore, to a point of no return, if government does not intervene. The intervention by employing expatriates is only short term solution and in actual fact treats the signs and not the symptoms and, is therefore, an inadequate treatment regimen, which would reappear to haunt successive governments. The actual “antibiotic” and remedy is to develop an innovative strategy in the medium term. To train and educate local citizens in various scientific disciplines in order to meet the demands of the acute and chronic manpower shortages in sciences rather than relying on expatriates.

This was observed under Apartheid, particularly in the state medical, engineering, veterinary sciences, and sciences in general, including education departments of both South Africa and the erstwhile homelands. There were no checks and balances either, resulting in the compromise of patient care, delivery, and differing teaching standards at schools. Language was also a great barrier to orderly delivery, contracts were ignored and many have now become citizens and are now in private practice, negating the very reasons for their employment.

The recruitment of expatriate or foreign professionals also poses a more serious dilemma; firstly they compete with local graduates for the limited number of positions available in different sectors but more importantly in the state services. Of greater importance and significance is the cost factor of recruiting them, even if they are placed on contract. This is further exacerbated by the fact that in general, the direct monetary costs to the state is too exorbitant and this cost is reflected hereunder in the table 1.

Table 1: Direct monetary costs in recruiting one foreign national by the state over a three (3) year contact period as a family unit.

	VARIABLES AND COSTS	RANDS
1.	Recruitment-Air travel at start and end of contract at R4000 per person. (Family Unit of 4 minimum)	60 000
2.	Setting in Allowance and Internal Travel	5000
3.	Housing –Minimum Subsidised	40 000
4.	Schooling/University for children : Assuming 1 child is at University, and child at school	450 000
5.	Work for spouse if not regulated: Salary plus Bonus	200 000
6.	Salary and Allowances for professional recruited	360 000
7.	Gratuity at end of contract at 20 % (Salary only) tax free	32 000
8.	Accrual of Leave Benefits	13 000
9.	Medical Insurance	25 000
10.	Relocation costs at end of contract	50 000
11.	Training Costs	30 000
12.	Miscellaneous expenses (curtains, furniture etc)	18000

TOTAL COST ROUNDED OFF	R 1 300 000
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NOTE: THESE COSTS WERE PROJECTED NEARLY YEARS AGO, AND TE COSTS TODAY WILL BE AT LEAST TWICE OR THRICE OF THE COSTS AT THAT TIME.

From the above, it is seen that the cost for a single professional and his/her family unit at minimum projections is exorbitant and totals R 1300 000 in a contract cycle/period of three (3) years.

Even if about 30 percent of total earnings are taxed the state incurs a direct cost of sum R 900 000 per family unit (rounded up to R1 million per family unit)

If remittance of foreign exchange is considered, at 50 percent of actual earnings and amount of R 250 000 per family unit or US \$ 63 000 dollars at that time (left the country) leaves the country in each three year contract period.

If this is extrapolated for 100 professionals (rounded off) at \$ 63 000 US dollars, an amount of \$ 6.5 million US dollars or R26 million South African Rands left the country at that time, in a three year cycle.

Although these figures are not finite or all inclusive and if an extrapolation at a minimum of 1000 expatriate professionals is undertaken on the basis of various professional disciplines (medical, dental, engineering, veterinary and other sciences) the costs are as follows and is reflected hereunder in table 2.

Table: 2

Direct Costs for 1000 professionals recruited for different science disciplines and amount of foreign capital leaving the country.

Number of Expatriate Professionals in various Science Disciplines	COST PER UNIT (R)	TOTAL COST (R)
1000	R1,300 000	1,300 Million (US \$325 Million)
Foreign Exchange Remittance in a three year period		
1000	R 250 000 US \$ 63 000	25 Million (US \$6,5 Million)
TOTAL DIRECT COST	R 1, 300 +R 25 Million	R 1.325 Million

NOTE: THE ABOVE FIGURES WILL CHANGE DRAMATICALLY, IF APPLIED TODAY. THE COSTS WILL BE AT LEAST TWICE OR THRICE TODAY.

The above data is self –explanatory and imposed a very serious fiscal constraint upon the state and is therefore a very serious concern. This state of affairs will have to be very seriously understood and taken into consideration when arriving at any decision, It also points very seriously on the moral question.

If an extrapolation on the basis of the number of South African students that could be trained internally, if this amount of money was used to train quality science graduates , the state would have gone a long way in addressing the crucial aspect of training in various disciplines, particularly in the medium term and in this very three year cycle offered to expatriates to work in the country.

A science graduate could be trained at a base line figure of R 200 000 over a three year period using the same money outlaid for employment of expatriates. The amount of R 1,300 million would yield about 6250 graduates. If this figure (6250) is lowered in respect of some of the sciences, veterinary, engineering and medicine which are 6 year courses and depending on the number of professionals, about 5000 graduates could be comfortably yielded in respect of all sciences. Even if we cater for a 20 percent failure and drop-out rate the yield will be the region of 4 000 graduates (These figures would change upwards today).

Given the above revealing extrapolations, South Africa needs to develop meaningful and sound intervention strategies in order to address the needs of science training. Further a commitment is required by all role players and above all the necessary political will is more than a vital. The vicious cycle of relying on expatriate professionals creates its own problems in respect of deflating local citizens, reduces pride and dignity and perpetuates the status quo, from which we must emerge in terms of gaining the moral high ground. On South Africa's side is the fact

BRAIN DRAIN WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO THE VETERINARY PROFESSION, PROBLEMS AND CHALLENGES

If a thorough analysis of brain drain as it refers to South African professionals in various disciplines to be undertaken in a relationship to monetary costs, the figures could and would be "mind boggling" and too vast to contemplate, especially in respect to the direct costs to the state and the South African taxpayer.

It may be argued that, it is the democratic right of any citizen to emigrate after receiving his/her veterinary education, solely on the basis of natural freedom and as enshrined in the principles of the constitution of the country. In as much as one might agree with this principle, there are opposing viewpoints to certain professional categories, based on needs of essential services and shortage of personnel, based on the fact that, professionals are trained to meet the manpower demands of the country and therefore, for a specific purpose and, that too at a taxpayers' expense.

In other words the state would be called upon every now and then to evaluate the need and the requirement of certain categories of professionals who would be obliged to serve the nation for a period of time, such that citizens give back to the nation and its people in service for the privilege education provided to such individuals at state costs. This period would have to be defined in order to maximise returns. This formula has been used by many countries of the world that have similar profile as South Africa and has been very successful.

In the event that any citizen who is not desirous of fulfilling this requirement or compulsory internship period, he/she will be allowed to buy out this obligation at a stipulated cost, based on a formula that would be developed and calculated using the variable of actual expenditure by the state versus actual costs of producing a veterinary graduate, the time period of service required and so on. Once this obligation of service, say a period of two years is successfully undertaken, the degree certificate will be issued and the individual would be allowed thereafter to choose whatever he/she desires to do without any let or hindrance.

Turning specifically to the veterinary profession, it is a well known fact that the predominantly rural areas are undersupplied with veterinarians and that in the South African make up, veterinary personnel are historically maldistributed. In reality the number of veterinarians being produced must be evaluated on the basis of requirements and more importantly on what the fiscus can afford. A comprehensive needs analysis must be undertaken with immediate effect. There is no doubt that the success of veterinary education in this country will be determined by this variable and by market forces and, the markets that veterinarians are being produced for.

This is entirely a different debate and would assume significance when amalgamation is achieved. The big question that the writer poses – **IS THERE A NEED FOR AMALGAMATION OR SHOULD THE NEW PROPOSED FACULTY BE CONSTITUTED AFRESH?** This would enable the new system to bring the old order to an end and therefore, it would allow for new debates in respect of veterinary education, the possibilities of training for new markets and repositioning the veterinary curriculum to meet these market forces and the developing dynamics of a research momentum that will also have to be redefined, allowing the new veterinary profession to charter a new course for purposes of survival and, in order to meet new demands and challenges. The other factor is that, it might be difficult at this stage to convince politicians and government to allocate more funds to the veterinary profession considering other more urgent demands and challenges that need to be addressed.

On the other hand the relevant success of the South African Veterinary Services has to been by design but in reality by default and, this does not require the wisdom of Solomon to understand. If one has to extrapolate using different world indicators for veterinary and para-veterinary professionals in respect of animal/human population data, South Africa’s ratios in respect of veterinary manpower, may be better than some countries, but importantly falls far short in respect of adequate and sustained delivery mechanisms and therefore, negates the very concept of advancement, development, promotion, access, and equity thus leading to compromises to production potential and diseases control programmes that impinge negatively upon the health parameters and upon the South African economy.

If one has to further extrapolate and indicate using veterinary manpower distribution in respect of veterinarians only, the position becomes vivid. If a baseline figure of plus/minus 2000 veterinarians for South Africa is used, these figures would translate as follows and is captured hereunder in tables 3 and 4.

**Table 3
Total Number of Registered Veterinarians in Different Categories in the Republic of South Africa.**

Category	Number	Race
General Registered veterinarians	2040	White and Black
Specialist Veterinarians	50	Predominantly White
Restricted Veterinarians	23	All Foreigners
Veterinarians Working Outside the Profession Plus/Minus – Adjust	37	White and Black
Total Adjusted	2150	All Races and Foreigners
Adjusted Total	2000	

*Note

Kindly not that the figures for those working outside the profession have been adjusted for purposes of achieving rounded figures and will not be utilised for calculations. That plus/minus 20 specialists also appear on the general register and that these figures will be subtracted, whilst those that appear under the restricted category will not be included in the overall calculations and projections. The rounded figure therefore comprises 2040 + 30 specialists, minus (23,37 and 20 =80). The projected figure for calculations and projection purposes is 2070 – 80 = 1990adjusted to 2000 veterinarians.

DEMOGRAPHICS AND DISTRIBUTION OF VETERINARY MANPOWER

Table 4, hereunder will make various projections and calculations in respect of race demographics, distribution of veterinarians in respect of different work environments, number of citizens by naturalisation, restricted veterinarians and, other features as applicable. This is undertaken solely on the basis to allow for easy understanding of various issues and for purposes of projecting a holistic picture.

Table 4:

Demographics, Distribution and Other Variables of all Veterinarians in the Republic of South Africa.

No. Of Black Veterinarians	80	04	African, Indian, Coloured
No. Of White Expatriates – Plus/Minus (Neutralised)	100	05	European citizens. Other Countries
No. Of Black/White Expatriate – Plus/Minus (Restricted)	30	1,05	African and European. Other Countries
No. Of Black Vets Qualified in South Africa Plus/Minus	60	03	African, Coloured and Indian
No. Of Black Vets Qualified Outside Country	20	01	African, coloured and Indian
No. Of Vets (Projected)	200	10	Predominantly White
No. at OVI	35	1,75	All White (5 Expat, Kenya Spain etc.)
No. at OP Faculty	80	04	Predominantly White
No. at Medunsa	45	2,25	Predominantly White (5 Expatriates)
SADF Plus/Minus	20	01	All White
SPCA’s Plus/Minus (Mostly/Contract)	10	(1)0,05	All Races
Vets in Industry	60	03	All White Except 3 Blacks
Vets in Poultry	38	02	All White
Vets in Private Practice	985	(49) 50	Predominantly White (25 Black –Plus/Minus)
SA Vets Working Out of Veterinary Science	200	01	All white
Others Working out of Veterinary Science	37	02	All Races
Total (Rounded%)	2000	100	Combined

*NOTE: By Black is meant (African, Coloured and Indian National)

Given the above demographics, it is obvious and abundantly clear that, the South African Veterinary profession and veterinary services in general, including the different work settings in which veterinarians are employed in the Republic of South Africa is dominated by White citizens, who make up 95 percent of all veterinarians. Of interest is the fact that expatriate veterinarians (White and Black – Non citizens and those that have been Naturalised) make up 6,5 percent of the total , of which 5 percent are expatriate Whites and 1 percent Black - mostly in the erstwhile territories of the former homelands.

Matched against black citizens who either qualified abroad or at home, these expatriates make up a larger number than Black South African veterinarians, who are citizens by birth (African, Coloured or Indian and therefore, no arguments of justification of these expatriates must be given, in respect that they are now naturalised citizens or permanent residents for various reasons, beyond the scope of his paper). Black veterinarians by birth comprise less than 4 percent of the total number of veterinarians in the Republic of South African tax payers money. Twenty five percent of Black veterinarians qualified outside the country and up to 1988/89 this group comprised 100 percent of Black veterinarians.

The other important variable is the fact that, the profession is dominated by private practitioners that make up 50 percent of the internal profession, whilst 10 percent are working abroad, primarily in private practice. It can be confidently asserted that plus/minus 60 percent of South African veterinarians are engaged in private practice.

About 200 or 10 percent are employed by the state veterinary services This is the projected figure and is consistent with state figured with the new provinces in place, in the context of the new South Africa. If an extrapolation is made on the basis of race demographics within the state services, there are about 30 percent black citizens employed as opposed to 70 percent whites. If expatriate Blacks are considered then he figure changes to plus/minus 40 percent Blacks as opposed to 60 percent Whites. It is in the area of state veterinary services that the greatest integration has and is taking place. This must be looked at on the bass that some of the erstwhile TBVC states employed a number of Black veterinarians and not th former South African state. The other indicators are self – explanatory in respect of the data presented. Another variable to be considered is the fact that in the event that the state services require more veterinarians, then government would have to intervene at local level by attracting some veterinarians from the private sector into the services. This could be achieved by making the salaries and total packages more attractive, thus avoiding any recruitment of foreign nationals.

The writer presents the following data in respect of South African veterinarians registered with the Royal College. By the same token those that may be in New Zealand and/or other countries. This data is reflected in table 5 hereunder:

Table: 5
South African Veterinarians Registered with the Royal College and/or Working in Other Foreign Countries.

Country or countries	Number Registered 1994 and 1995 with the royal College and Other Foreign Countries	No. Of South African Veterinarians Working Abroad
The United kingdom	1994 – 387 1995 – 370	Difficult to Determine in spite of Consulting the Royal College and the SAVC
	Figured Projected	150 Plus/Minus
New Zealand	Not Available	10 Plus/Minus

USA, Australia and Other Countries	Not Available	40 Plus/Minus
Total	Plus/Minus 450	200

***NOTE**

The figures projected above are not complete and therefore, it is not possible to give finite or exact figures. However, it does indicate that a number of veterinarians are registered abroad and that a number are residing and working abroad. These figures underscore the point that for some reason a number of South African veterinarians maintain registration with the Royal College, although they reside and work and work in South Africa. For this paper it is assumed solely on the basis that is a known fact that a number of veterinarians do leave the country to work and reside abroad and primarily in the United Kingdom and therefore, a figure of nearly 50 percent of those assumed registered with the Royal College or 200 is used. This is also captured on the basis of replacements costs. The South African Veterinary Council and the Royal College did not provide figures, inspite of request of requests to do so. This in no way compromises the discussion under review, nor does it impinge upon the projections made.

The fact that a number of South African veterinarians are working abroad, due to automatic registration, (vice versa) and is of a serious concern; can also be evaluated from the perspective that such an arrangement works to the advantage of a selected group that is afforded automatic registration, in all countries that have automatic registration arrangements, whilst all others have to subject themselves to an examination to obtain registration in order to practice in the country in any sphere of veterinary science. The question arises as follows: To whose benefit is automatic registration or has automatic registration benefitted South Africa? In this regard the position is articulated hereunder:

- a) That it is a disadvantage to South Africa in respect to costs and manpower shortages in the peri-urban and rural areas. That the concept and mechanism of a defined period of service must be relentlessly pursued.
- b) That, in the case of South African Veterinarians working in the United Kingdom by the virtue of automatic registration, it can be considered as a practical arrangement in allowing United Kingdom Veterinarians to have a loose arrangement or to allow for a professional assistant to allow the local veterinarian to escape the drudgery of the cold winters, in the United Kingdom
- c) From an unemployment point of view it could be argued that, such an arrangement assist South Africa. If this is a sustained argument then it brings into question the number of veterinarians being produced by the local faculties in South Africa.
- d) The question of young people leaving the country permanently must be considered as a serious concern and will have to be addresses.
- e) On the other hand, it can be viewed from the perspective that young graduates seeking adventure and exposure are apt to explore opportunities in respect of experience abroad for short periods of time, to see the world and by the same token accumulate capital for themselves. Job opportunities are available in the state and other settings, if we consider the number of new posts currently being advertised.

- f) At the same time it may be argued that the foreign capital or foreign exchanges via earnings are remitted to South Africa. This is not entirely true based on the fact that given the perceptions of people in respect of South Africa and, in addition that much travelling is undertaken in Europe by graduates and the poor value of the rand internally that, very small remittances are made and that people choose to keep their money in the United Kingdom and/ or Europe for various reasons. A fair amount of capital in foreign exchange also leaves the country during the departure from South Africa. The maintenance of registration by South Africans and registration with the Royal College either on arrival in the United Kingdom or before departure is also a factor that must be considered. If a baseline of 400 veterinarians in this category is considered at 50 British pounds each, it translates to an unnecessary capital flight of some plus/minus R120 000
- g) The fact that a far greater number of South African graduates sojourn either or permanently in the United Kingdom or New Zealand or use these countries as a spring board for some other foreign destination, indicates that is no benefit to the South Africa, but the benefit to accrues to the new adopted country or the host country.
- h) The benefit of undergraduate from the United Kingdom and New Zealand sojourning or residing in South Africa is very minimal and therefore does not really enter the equation. Not that it is not a matter of concern.
- i) From the above, it is felt that, if the Royal College wants to recognise any South African qualification it would be its prerogative to do so without any let or hindrance or, if it so decides that South African veterinary graduates will have to write the MRCVS examination then, this too will be its prerogative. In the light of the above, the writer hereof, is of the South African Veterinary Council and that the fact that, the SAVC makes its own rules, that any graduate from anywhere in the world and desirous of working in South Africa or settling in South Africa, including members of the Royal College and those from New Zealand must appear for the South African Veterinary council examinations, without exception for purposes of registration and that the automatic registration clause be repealed and this type of registration be withdrawn by the South African Veterinary Council.

FURTHER ANALYSIS AND RELATIONSHIP TO PRIVATE PRACTICE

In Further analysis the situation and in no way pre-empting the discussion nor attempting to impinge upon private practitioners, it is important to note that the veterinary profession for various reasons in the Republic of South Africa was historically aimed at the private practice and when this is compared with developing countries of a similar profile, it is and was more lucrative and was basically geared to specific middle class that was developed in the context of this country and not in terms of the profession serving the total interest of the population and the country as a whole which is predominantly a so called "Third World" country.

The returns from private practice in south Africa is declining and job opportunities are becoming less pronounced and therefore, added pressure is being exerted upon the profession, coupled with diminishing work opportunities. On the other hand the number of Black veterinarians that opt for private practice is minimal, solely on the basis that, historically

veterinary science as a profession had very little exposure from the perspective of pursuing it as a career and more importantly due to neglect of exposure in Black communities. In addition, it is very expensive to set up a private practice, that Black communities, by and large cannot afford exorbitant fees (now also being experienced in White communities), guaranteed employment in the TBVC states previously but not in the former South Africa (or Medunsa graduates) client bias, lack of offerings to Black veterinarians for locums and professional assistant-ships by White counterparts, problems in obtaining loans from banks, stringent veterinary council rules and a host of other factors are some of the causes.

The above picture points to some very serious problems and challenges, in respect to the entire spectrum of the veterinary sciences, the profession as a whole and opportunities to redress these imbalances, must now become a priority and be placed high on the agenda, thus moving away from a parochial approach to a more needs assessment profile. All of this must now be debated. Intensively in order to shape new policy and safeguard the veterinary profession, but vitally to propel the veterinary profession into the new century that awaits us all in the very near future.

SOME SOLUTIONS

The writer is in no way making a statement that veterinary opportunities in the country has reached crisis proportions, but is sounding an appropriate warning that if the profession does not intervene, we could rapidly reach a crisis. What the writer is alluding to is the fact that the profession was and is to a point, even today, insulated and not innovative enough, to take a quantum leap into the future, given its past history of development and that a completely new orientation and a new patriotism is now necessary and required. What then should be done?

1. An assessment of needs in the context of fiscal allocation and its accompanying realities and the support and promotion of the private veterinarian and the concept of the private and group practice, together with the promotion of use payment and affordable state veterinary services.
2. The determination of the number of veterinarians and para veterinary professionals that are required on a yearly basis. In other words a total needs analysis.
3. The number of veterinarians or highly trained para-veterinary professionals required by the state in respect of delivery in the rural areas to meaningfully address problems and for how long, must now become an imperative.
4. That the South African Veterinary Council examinations only be offered to individuals who can prove beyond doubt that they will be granted immigrant status, as approved by the Department of Home Affairs. In this regard the South African Veterinary Council must advise Home Affairs in respect of the problems being faced by local graduates and that veterinary science be declared a category for non immigrant status, until further notice or by a review that will be conducted every 6 years.
5. That the South African Veterinary Council, deliberate on issues and seriously consider the view of halting the provision of allowing expatriates to write the South African Veterinary Council examinations. In other words declaring a moratorium in consultation with government, outlining the reasons.
6. To stem the tide of new graduates leaving to oversea destinations after qualifying and to pursue the option of service to the nation by such graduates for a defining period.
7. To avoid any possible consequence, if the veterinary profession does not play a pivotal, crucial and proactive role, in conscientising government to the envisaged problems in recruiting expatriate veterinarians to work in the state services particularly in the rural areas. This could be a reality for many reasons.

MONETARY COSS OF BRAIN DRAIN

What then is the cost of brain drain to the Republic of South Africa, considering that new graduates emigrate either permanently or temporarily to countries that afford automatic registrations?

1. A loss of a number of veterinary professionals to the advantage of other countries.
2. Monetary loss to the tune of producing a veterinarian at state or tax payers cost of some R350 000 per graduate and rounded off to plus/minus R500 000 at a 10 percent (minimum) escalation of inflation.
3. By calculation over a 3 year period of 50 graduates leaving the country per three year cycle, a figure of 50x R500 000. An amount at the very minimum of R25 Million is lost as direct costs only.
4. This investment could and can be used more gainfully in other manpower development scenarios, when one considers that after training, not a single cent is ploughed back by these graduates towards nation building in respect of much needed skills obtained via the state and particularly due to the philanthropy of the tax payer.

Table 6, hereunder reflects the replacement costs of veterinarians leaving the country after receiving their veterinary education in South Africa.

**Table: 6
Costs of Replacing Fifty (50) Qualified Veterinarians in a Three Year Cycle Leaving the Country.**

Cost of Training 50 Veterinarians by the State of South Africa	R25 Million
Replacement Costs of 50 Expatriate veterinarians- as a family unit at R1.3 Million without inflation	R65 Million
Combined Loss to the Country in Monetary Terms is therefore	R80 Million

***NOTE**

It has to be noted that this is calculated at minimum costs assuming 50 veterinarians that are to be replaced. Note also that this only attempts to paint a picture in respect of the objective realities over a three year contract period. That the costs are actually much higher.

This loss must also be viewed from the monetary aspect in respect to the current position as it pertains to automatic registration, but could have devastating effects if the influx of expatriate veterinarians is allowed, but more importantly distorts manpower requirements, and also leads to uncontrolled varied standards of veterinary delivery and above all a lack of patriotism and other possible outcomes.

REGISTRATION OF EXPATRITE SPECIALISTS AND RESEARCHERS

The recognition of foreign specialists degrees must be regulated by Veterinary Council in terms of the veterinary act of the country. Registration must be based on the acceptance of a particular

specialist degree and on the basis of immigrant status as defined by the Department of Home Affairs and in conjunction with the South African Veterinary Council

The initial qualification/ degree must be recognized by virtue of a candidate having appeared for the South African Veterinary Council examination and having successfully passed the said examination, and considered to be fully registered as a veterinarian. Having fulfilled this requirement, the said specialist qualification is either accepted or rejected for the purpose of specialist practice, based on a set of criteria as to which specialist qualifications are accepted by the South African Veterinarian Council.

In the case of expatriates entering the country on the basis of an invitation by the state veterinary services of the provinces or the national state veterinary services, veterinary research or other research institutions, the faculties of veterinary science or any other institution within the country, an exemption with full registration for that purpose must be allowed for a period of 12 months or part thereof. In the case of academics taking up permanent appointment within veterinary faculties without registration the automatic registration must be limited to non clinical fields and for the period of three years only. Thereafter the candidate must appear for the veterinary council examination. Failure to comply with these regulations will automatically lead to the termination of this dispensation. This aspect has to be intensely debated before a decision can be taken.

STANDARDS AND EQUALITY OF QUALIFICATIONS FOR ALL

There are many countries in the world that do not accept degrees/veterinary qualifications for purposes of automatic registrations, irrespective. One such example is the United States of America. No foreign qualification/veterinary degree outside the context of the North American continent is accepted for purposes of automatic registration. Any person desirous of practicing veterinary science in the USA or working in the USA must appear for a formal veterinary examination for purposes of licencing. Generally a foreign graduate must write the Education Certificate for Foreign Veterinary Medical Graduates (examination) (ECVMG). In addition to this examination and in some cases the candidate would have to appear for the Board examination of a particular state, if he/she is desirous of practicing or working as a veterinarian in a particular state in the United States.

This is the basis that the South African Veterinary Council, must seriously consider in respect of the registration of any foreign qualification. Such a policy must be adopted and then followed relentlessly and without deviation, thus allowing for equality of access for all, irrespective. In this context, expatriates studying at any level within the faculties must first fulfill Home Affairs requirements, cannot work in the country, have to leave the country immediately after qualifying and that the study permit must not be used for purposes of a permanent residence and or citizenship. This has never been enforced. Although this aspect fits into another debate, due cognizance and recognition of this issue must also be placed on the agenda.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The writer hereof endorses and makes the following recommendations and therefore, reiterates that given the salient arguments pursued in this discussion paper, that reciprocal arrangements and/or automatic registration be seriously reviewed, discussed and debated in order to

appreciate the realities and possible future problems that can result from maintaining such arrangements. That this dispensation be withdrawn or repealed thus bringing to an end the long, historic, sensitive but selective arrangement of automatic registration and/or reciprocal arrangements. The following recommendations are made:

1. That South Africa, like many countries including the United States of America is not a homogenous population and therefore, requests to recognise certain qualifications will always come to the fore. This has the potential of heightening tension, causing unnecessary strife, and allowing for uncontrollable discretionary powers. This all important factor compromises the South African Veterinary Council.
2. That examinations for any individual/ expatriate holding a veterinary qualification desirous of practicing or working in South Africa, must be the sole criteria, thus eliminating any bias or perceived bias to special arrangements entered into.
3. That criteria for registration will be standardized and uniformed for all, thus eliminating selectivity and subjectivity and thereby allow for the control of standards.
4. This will allow for the controlling of the number of expatriate veterinarians entering the country and thus safeguard local graduates and job opportunities.
5. It does not automatically translate to the fact that if a candidate is allowed automatic registration that, such a veterinarian is automatically a competent veterinarian.
6. That automatic registration and/or reciprocal arrangements by their very nature are bias to some in an open democracy and does not allow for equal access.
7. That the Veterinary Council must regulate its examinations in respect of broad principles of veterinary medicine and surgery, but more importantly will be in a position to determine the candidates understanding of local veterinary conditions, applicable to the RSA, irrespective. More importantly to determine the knowledge of candidates in respect of flora and fauna of the Republic, which are the important components of veterinary training in this country.
8. That by promulgating a single policy for registration of foreign qualifications, would be sending out a strong message to politicians, that any political decision must be very carefully thought out, must not be imposed on veterinary council, if South Africa's veterinary interests are to be served, thus maintaining the credibility and autonomy of the veterinary council.
9. That the South African Veterinary Council's historic recognition of certain English speaking universities, will eliminate a Eurocentric bias that has been historically justified for the wrong reasons.
10. That in so doing, the South African Veterinary Council, would have taken a quantum leap into the future and it would have taken due cognisance of monetary costs to the state, from the perspective of inflow and outflow of veterinarians.
11. A host of other reasons.

AN ALTERNATE RECOMMENDATION

These matters and the arguments pursued in this paper must also be viewed with the possibilities of an alternative argument that, relates to automatic registration and/or reciprocal arrangement. That the South African Veterinary Council could start afresh by measuring standards of veterinary training, veterinary faculties, research capacity, academic standards and a host of other variables, but qualified by a sustained visitation process to determine which faculties on the African continent and the world stage, it would automatically accept for registration purposes and/or reciprocal arrangements. This has to be intensely debated, but the

option should be carefully weighed against the recommendations made in this paper and not articulated from the premise of viewing this as an appropriate gap, thus diluting the debate and issues presented in this discussion paper, thus allowing the maintenance of current historic arrangements in respect of automatic registration without further examination and thus perpetuating the historic status quo.

CONCLUSION

This paper has attempted to cover a host of variables, in respect of the subject under discussion, but very importantly has attempted to place on the table, the issues relating to this vexing but rather important issue.

The writer acknowledges that it has not been an easy task and wishes to acknowledge that the arguments advanced are not all inclusive and may have not captured all the issues with the degree of faculty that they deserved. It is also not possible for the writer hereof, to bring the issue to any form of finality.

It is further acknowledged that the issue of automatic registration and/or reciprocal arrangements is a very sensitive issue and therefore, in no way has the discussion attempted to impinge upon the integrity of the South African Veterinary Council, any other institution or upon the integrity of any individual.

An honest attempt has been made to place the facts on the table, in order to stimulate reasoned debate and discussions, thus allowing for composite group understanding of the dynamics of automatic registration and/or reciprocal arrangements, in the form of general discussion of the issues, which are intertwined with the important facets of a historical perspective. It is hoped that all of this could lead to sound decisions in respect of informing the debate.

Lastly, the writer hereof, is of the firm opinion that there are many more advantages and disadvantages in respect of no longer maintaining automatic registration with any country.

The truth in the statement, that changing the law does not necessarily ensure changed attitudes or, more the things change the more they remain the same, is unfortunately the reality that we are currently confronted with in South Africa and, despite our new found, but noisy democracy.

In this regard a special responsibility now rests on the shoulders of the South African Veterinary Council, more than ever before. This is a period of reconciliation, but reconciliation must not be based on issues that will ultimately compromise our position as a profession and decisions taken must be based on rationality, common sense and on the basis of what is right. Decisions must not emanate from emotion. If this is achieved we would have moved a long way in attempting to serve the veterinary profession and South Africa, with greater pride and dignity, but very importantly veterinary issues must be dealt with, in an open mind and an open atmosphere, without let or hindrance and with the resilience that these issues deserve.

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apartheid state. It is to their resilience and courage in fighting oppression of a brutal regime. May justice and equality triumph irrespective at all times.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

There is no classical bibliography because, this article was prepared for the South African Veterinary Council upon their request, given the authors experience over time. He led the veterinary struggle in South Africa against discriminatory legislation barring Black veterinarians to practice in South Africa, if they obtained their veterinary qualification from veterinary schools not recognized by the then South African apartheid government and, therefore, the then South African Veterinary Council aided and abetted the imperatives of the apartheid state. The author had the privilege of serving on the South African Veterinary Council as a member for ten years before and after democracy was ushered in South Africa, post 1994. Various Veterinary Acts were consulted in preparing this document. These are cited within the text of the document.