

REGISTRATION OF VETERINARIANS & PARA-PROFESSIONALS IN MALAWI

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THE VETERINARY SECTOR

- A very small sector
- In total, about 22 resident veterinarians
- 5 veterinarians in private sector (private practice)
- 4 veterinarians in the academia
- 7 veterinarians in the public sector
- 3 veterinarians in private organizations/NGOs

CONT'D

- 3 Veterinarians retired
- Effectively, there are only 2 field veterinarians in the whole country (deployed in FMD-risk zones)
- However, currently about 183 para-veterinarians (against an establishment of 487 posts in the public sector-62% vacancy rate)
- Hence, an extremely weak veterinary sector.

WHY WEAK VETERINARY SECTOR

- Absence of a School of Veterinary Medicine
- A near zero investment in tertiary veterinary education in the country (currently only 2 candidates in training at Sokoine University)
- Lack of interest in Veterinary Medicine by the young generation. Profession not being vigorously marketed

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- Overemphasis on crop production at the expense of livestock production
- Lack of appreciation or understanding on the importance of veterinary science in livestock production by top Government officials
- A weak, non-operational Malawi Board of Veterinary Surgery

THE LEGAL INSTRUMENT FOR THE REGISTRATION PROCESS

It is guided by an Act of Parliament, the Veterinary & Para-veterinary Practitioners Act of 2001

This act provides for:

- a. The establishment of the Board of Veterinary Surgery
- b. The registration and disciplining of veterinary surgeons & para-veterinary surgeons.

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- c. The licensing of private practice of veterinary surgery
- d. The control and regulation of the practice of veterinary surgery.

COMPOSITION OF THE BOARD

- Board - sole registering authority of all persons deemed appropriate for registration under the Act
- Members include
 1. Director of Animal Health & Industry (now a neutral position).
 2. The solicitor general
 3. 3 registered veterinary surgeons
 4. 2 registered para-veterinary practitioners nominated by VAAM.

FUNCTIONS OF THE BOARD

- Assist in the promotion and improvement of animal health and industry in Malawi.
- To enforce discipline and control of all persons registered under this Act & practicing veterinary surgery in Malawi.
- To control & exercise authority affecting the training of persons in the profession of vet. Surgery
- To promote liaison in the field of training in the profession of veterinary surgery both within Malawi and elsewhere & to promote the standard of such training in Malawi.

COMMITTEES OF THE BOARD

- Disciplinary committee
- Provision in the Act for the formation of other committees
- In Malawi, the Registration & Inspectorate committee
- Education & Training committee
- The Finance & Administration committee

THE REGISTRATION PROCESS

The day to day management of the Board is by the Registrar (CEO)

- Acts as Secretary to Board/any committee
- Registrar processes any written application made by veterinary surgeons /para-professionals for registration (application fees, relevant authentic certificates etc necessary for registration)

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- No person, according to the Act can practice veterinary surgery, allow himself to be held out as a veterinary surgeon etc unless his name appears on the Register as a Veterinary surgeon or as a para-veterinarian
- Registrar also gazettes names, addresses and dates of registration annually

ELIGIBILITY FOR REGISTRATION

- Holder of a degree, diploma, certificate or other qualification recognized by the Board.
- Must satisfy the Board that he has acquired sufficient knowledge in veterinary science.
- Has adequate knowledge of the English language.
- Has acceptable character, is fit and a proper

DE - REGISTRATION

- Upon written application to the Board by veterinary surgeon/para-professional to have his/her name removed from Register
- Upon death of vet surgeon/para-professional
- When Board is satisfied registered person is no longer practicing veterinary surgery in the country

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- Gross incompetence or bringing the profession into disrepute/ Improper /disgraceful conduct (Disciplinary committee)
- Conviction of an offence under the Veterinary/Para-veterinary Practitioners Act or any other written law, which, in the opinion of the Board renders him unfit to be on the register.

REGULATION OF PRIVATE PRACTICE

- Issuance of Private Practice License by Board depends on
 - a. Suitable experience in veterinary surgery or science by applicant and must be registered by the Board.
 - b. Also necessary to disclose whether the license is on his own behalf as a private practitioner or to be employed (whole time or part time)
 - c. Suitable premises which (role of registration & inspection committee) have met all basic criteria or guidelines laid down by the Board for registration.

CHALLENGES

- The perception of veterinary education as a non-priority issue
- Weak enforcement of the law because of a non-operational BVS, hence lots of quacks in the country
- Non-operational secretariat for the Board; no structures in place yet
- No jurisdiction over vet medicinal products or equipment-mandate of another Board!!

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Having noted that the Board of Veterinary Surgery in Malawi is not fully operational because of the absence of a permanent structure (Secretariat) and an independent operational budget for the implementation of its activities, it is being recommended that Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security, as a parent Ministry overseeing veterinary matters in Malawi facilitate as a matter of urgency the creation of a secretariat for the Malawi Board of Veterinary Surgery so that the core functions of the Board can start to be implemented immediately. In the interim, the secretariat should at least have a skeleton structure comprising the Registrar, Administrative Assistant/Accountant and a driver in substantive positions and should be run on an interim budget drawn from the parent Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security

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- To fully operationalize the Malawi Board of Veterinary Surgery in the next financial year, the personnel involved in the interim administration of the Board should embark on sensitization meetings of all key stakeholders (in particular MoAFS officials, Parliamentary Committee on Agriculture, Para-Veterinary training institutions etc) on the relevance of the Board regarding registration issues and on the importance of quality veterinary education for the country in this competitive globalized world. The interim administrators of the Board in liaison with Ministry of Agriculture & Food Security should prepare a full, activity-based annual budget for the Board to be presented to Parliament in the next budget sitting for the 2010/11 Financial year

- It is also highly recommended that when the Malawi Board of Veterinary Surgery is operational even in its skeletal form, as one of its priority activities, a Strategic Plan for the Board of Veterinary Surgery for the next five years should be produced as a guiding tool for the Board as soon as possible

- For the SADC region, it is being recommended that the registration process of veterinarians & para-veterinarians should be harmonized for purposes of uniformity of standards (equivalence) among member states

Thank you for your attention