**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**WRITTEN REPLY**

**QUESTION 1654**

**INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER [No 16-2021 SIXTH PARLIAMENT]
DATE OF PUBLICATION: 04 JUNE 2021**

**1654. Mr N P Masipa (DA) to ask the Minister of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development:**

1. What is the (a) total number of veterinarians in the Western Cape and (b)(i) current vacancy rate and (ii) date by which the specified province intends to fill the vacant positions;
2. what is the total number of veterinarians per livestock unit;
3. whether her department has implemented the compulsory service; if not, what is the position in this regard; if so, what are the relevant details;

(4) what were the (a) prevailing animal diseases during the past financial year and (b) interventions to treat them? **NW1861E**

**THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE, LAND REFORM AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT:**

1. (a) Veterinary services in the Western Cape is a directorate headed by the Senior Manager (Director) who is a veterinarian and who reports directly to the Executive Manager (Chief Director) in the department. There are 23 (18 State veterinarians and 5 Managers (Veterinarians).

(b)(i) There are only four unfilled positions out of the twenty two positions for veterinarians. Please note that this response excluded the director position which would have made the positions for veterinarians 23. The vacancy rate is therefore 18.8%.

(ii) The Western Cape Province is considering filling the vacant positions by December 2021. The filling of these positions will be guided by government prescripts related to resource constraints.

1. The FAO recommends a ratio of 1 veterinarian per 100 000 livestock units, and using this norm would result in the province requiring 15 State Veterinarians to carry out disease control, laboratory diagnostics and veterinary public health, which are the minimal requirements for a basic service. Considering the historical figures of veterinary livestock units in the Western Cape, the available veterinarians per veterinary livestock units is below norm that is 12.
2. The Compulsory Community Service (CCS) programme for veterinarians is being implemented. A total of 17 CCS veterinarians have been allocated to the Western Cape Province and are deployed in the various districts.
3. (a) The following diseases were prevalent in the Western Cape during the past financial year:
* Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza;
* African Swine Fever ;
* African Horse Sickness and
* other day to day animal diseases.

 (b) Whenever an animal disease outbreak occurs, relevant disease contingency plans are activated. Highly Pathogenic Avian influenza and African swine fever causes high mortalities in poultry and pigs respectively and are a serious threat to food security. Awareness campaigns are being conducted and improved surveillance for the diseases is implemented. African horse sickness is a disease of horses and other equines. It is a disease that is very trade sensitive and its occurrence leads to export restrictions.