**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**WRITTEN REPLY**

**QUESTION 1655**

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

**1655. 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 Northern 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? **NW1862E**

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

1. (a) Veterinary services in the Northern 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 7 state veterinary offices spread throughout the province and each state veterinary office have service centres in their areas that the Animal Health Technicians operate from. The number of veterinarians in the province is 9 and this number includes the Chief Director, Director and 2 Deputy Directors.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **POSITION**  | **STATION** | **FILLED**  | **VACANT** |
| Chief Director: Agricultural Technical Support Services | Kimberley | 1 | 0 |
| Director: Veterinary Services | Kimberley | 1 | 0 |
| Deputy Director: Animal Health | Kimberley | 0 | 1 |
| Deputy Director: Veterinary Public Health & Export Control | Kimberley | 1 | 0 |
| Deputy Directory: Veterinary Laboratory & Epidemiology | Kimberley  | 1 | 0 |
| State Veterinarian: Veterinary Laboratory | Kimberley  | 1 | 0 |
| State Veterinarian: Export Control | De Aar | 0 | 1 |
| State Veterinarian: Animal Health  | Kimberley | 1 | 0 |
| State Veterinarian: Animal Health  | De Aar | 1 | 0 |
| State Veterinarian: Animal Health  | Calvinia | 1 | 0 |
| State Veterinarian: Animal Health  | Springbok | 0 | 1 |
| State Veterinarian: Animal Health  | Upington | 0 | 1 |
| State Veterinarian: Animal Health  | Kuruman | 1 | 0 |
| State Veterinarian: Animal Health  | Mothibistad | 0 | 1 |
| **Total** |  | **9** | **5** |

(b)(i) current vacancy rate is about 36%

(ii) There is a moratorium currently in place on the filing of vacant posts due

 to the financial constraints put on the departmental budget by the Covid

 19 pandemic.

1. The FAO recommends a ratio of 1 veterinarian per 100 000 livestock units, and using this norm would result in the province requiring 16 State Veterinarians to carry out disease control, laboratory diagnostics and veterinary public health, which are the minimal requirements for a basic service.
2. The Compulsory Community Service (CCS) programme was finally rolled out in the Northern Cape province in 2016 with the number of CCS veterinarians increasing steadily from 4 to the current number of 7. This year, the CCS veterinarians only started on 1 March 2021 due to the disruption of the academic year caused by Covid 19 pandemic. The MEC, Mase Manopole welcomed the seven (7) newly qualified Veterinarians to the Department under the Compulsory Community Service (CCS) program. The areas that benefits from this programme include Kuruman (2), Kimberley (2), Prieska (1), Veterinary Laboratory (1) and Upington (1). These 7 placements significantly increased access to Veterinary Services in the province, increasing the number of field Animal Health Veterinarians from 4 to 10. The livestock farmers in the rural communities have welcomed the move by government to introduce the CCS programme to speed up rural animal health care.
3. No major disease of economic importance was recorded in the last 4 years. The Northern Cape Province received above normal rainfall that favoured the breeding of mosquitoes which are responsible for the transmission of Rift Valley Fever disease (RVF), African Horse Sickness, Lumpy Skin Disease, Bluetongue etc. The MEC for Agriculture, Environmental Affairs, Rural Development and Land Reform, Ms Mase Manopole was on an awareness drive, forewarning all farmers to vaccinate their cattle, sheep and goats against RVF before the peak of mosquitoes around March and April. The MEC also advised farmers to get vaccines from the cooperatives in the province and encouraged them not to eat dead animals and should always wear protective clothing when handling aborted foetuses.

Rabies remains prevalent in wildlife and to support this phenomenon, the provinces recorded a number of rabies cases with only one human case. Fortunately, the victim was successfully enrolled on a full course of post exposure rabies prophylaxis. 5153 pets were vaccinated during the World Rabies awareness period in the province.

Sheep scab has been reported in areas where farming with sheep is dominant. Sheep scab is traditionally most prevalent during the second and third quarter of the year and 2020 was no exception. All the confirmations were done by the Kimberley Veterinary laboratory, which is the only government laboratory that is accredited to do sheep scab testing. All the outbreaks were handled as per the protocol.