agriculture
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MEDIA STATEMENT **27 October 2025**

MINISTER STEENHUISEN WELCOMES CLARITY ON THE VETERINARY COUNCIL APPOINTMENT PROCESS

The Minister of Agriculture, John Steenhuisen, notes the judgment and consent order handed down by the Gauteng Division of the High Court on 24 October 2025 in the matter between the South African Veterinary Council (SAVC) and the Minister of Agriculture.

The order, which was granted by agreement between the parties, provides clarity on the next administrative steps for the constitution of the new SAVC. The court recorded that the minister's consultation with the outgoing council, as required in terms of Section 5(1)(b) of the *Veterinary and Para-Veterinary Professions Act, 1982 (Act No.19 of 1982)*, is regarded as duly completed. This enables the minister to proceed to appoint a selection panel, and thereafter, designate council members in accordance with the Act.

A consent order was granted by agreement with costs reserved. The order confirms that the minister acted within his statutory role and now continues that process under clear timelines. The withdrawal of the earlier directive for a rerun of the election reflects the parties' shared view that duplication of consultation has become unnecessary. The outgoing council's participation has been regarded as completed. The remainder of the statutory process henceforth continues. The department's position throughout was to ensure a process that is legally defensible and administratively sound.

The order reaffirms that the minister remains the appointing authority under the Act. Specifically, the minister must appoint a selection panel within 15 days of the court order and designate the council members identified by that panel within 25 days of receiving its recommendations. These functions are executive in nature and are part of the

minister's supervisory role, meaning that while the selection panel recommends, the minister retains the statutory duty to designate and formally constitute the new council through publication in the Government Gazette.

The department is finalising the process of the selection panel's appointment. Once constituted, the panel will undertake its work independently and transparently, after which the minister will designate the remaining members as required by Section 5(2)(a)-(f) of the Act. This process will ensure that the incoming council reflects both professional expertise and the public-interest mandate entrusted to it by law.

The minister reaffirms government's full support for the SAVC as the statutory regulator of the veterinary and para-veterinary professions. The department appreciates the patience of practitioners during this transitional phase and assures all stakeholders that the continuity of professional regulation has never been at risk. The minister further welcomes the opportunity this process has provided to clarify governance roles between the department and the council, ensuring smoother cooperation in future.

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Issued by: The Ministry of Agriculture