

## ANIMAL HEALTH ACT, 2023

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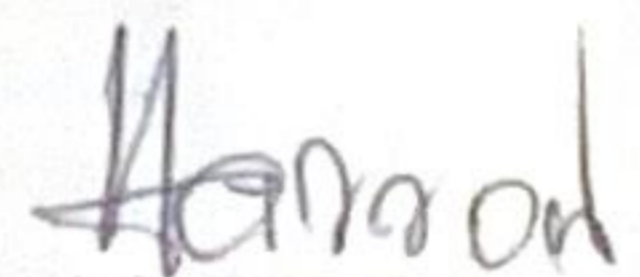
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THE GAMBIA  
NO. 14 OF 2023  
Assented to by The President,  
this 30<sup>th</sup> day of January, 2024.

L S

  
Adama Barrow  
President

## ANIMAL HEALTH ACT, 2023

**AN ACT** to provide for the effective regulation of the veterinary domain in The Gambia to achieve food security through the protection of livestock health, and for connected matters.

**ENACTED** by the President and the National Assembly.

[ ]

### PART I – PRELIMINARY

#### 1. Short title

This Act may be cited as the Animal Health Act, 2023.

#### 2. Interpretation

In this Act, unless the context otherwise requires –

“Act” means the Animal Health Act, 2023;

“animal” includes –

- (a) a mammal, reptile, bird, bee; and
- (b) a fish, a mollusc, a crustacean and an amphibian originating from an aquaculture establishment or from the wild;

“animal by-product” includes any product collected or manufactured from an animal other than muscle meat and milk;

“animal identification” means the combination of the identification and registration of an animal individually, with a unique identifier, or collectively by its epidemiological unit or group, with a unique group identifier;

“animal identification system” means the inclusion and linking of components such as identification of establishments or owners, the persons responsible for the animals, movements and other records with animal identification;

“animal health” means the overall physical condition and well-being of animals;

“animal traceability” means the ability to follow an animal or group of animals during all stages of its life;

"approved" means officially approved, accredited or registered by the Veterinary Services;

"Aquatic Code" means the OIE Aquatic Animal Health Code;

"authorised officer" means a qualified veterinarian or veterinary para-professional who is a member of staff of the Veterinary Services and such other person as the Veterinary Services may designate in writing for the purpose of implementing the Act;

"bio-security plan" means a plan that identifies potential pathways for the introduction and spread of disease in a zone or a compartment, and describes the measures which are being or will be applied to mitigate the disease risks, if applicable, as recommended in the appropriate international standards;

"border post" means an airport, a seaport, a railway station or a road check-point open to international trade of commodities, where import veterinary inspections can be performed;

"buffer zone" means a zone between an infected zone and an uninfected zone, where there are movement controls and surveillance activities;

"carcass" means the dead body of an animal and includes the meat, bones, hide, skin, hoofs, horns, offal or any other part of the dead body of an animal, separately or otherwise;

"cattle" means male and female animals of the *Bos taurus* or *Bos indicus* species or any cross breed of *Bos taurus* and *Bos indicus* species and includes the various age and productive categories, whether castrated or not, which is kept for milk, meat, draught power or for any other purpose;

"Codex Alimentarius" means the intergovernmental body within the framework of the Food and Agriculture of the United Nations and the World Health Organization which works to protect the health of consumers, ensures fair practices in world trade and promotes coordination of all work food standards undertaken by international governmental and non-governmental organisations;

"compartment" means an animal sub-population contained in one or more establishments under a common bio-security management system with a distinct health status with respect to a specific disease or specific diseases for which required surveillance, control and bio-security measures have been applied for the purpose of international trade or disease prevention and control;

"competent authority" means the Veterinary Services, which is responsible for ensuring or supervising the implementation in the territory of The Gambia, of animal health and welfare measures, international veterinary certification and other international standards and recommendations;

"condemn" means to be judged and declared by the Veterinary Services, or otherwise determined by the Veterinary Services, after inspection, as being unsafe or unsuitable for human consumption and requiring appropriate disposal;

"confiscate" means taking into custody of an animal, an animal part, an animal product or an animal by-product by the Veterinary Services for safe-keeping until an appropriate determination is made for either being returned to the owner or its proper disposal, having been the subject of violation of rules and regulations or posing risk to general human welfare and general animal welfare;

"containment zone" means an infected zone defined within a previously free region or zone, which includes all suspected or confirmed cases that are epidemiologically linked and where movement control, biosecurity and sanitary measures are applied to prevent the spread of, and to eradicate, the infection or infestation;

"disease" means an impairment or derangement of the normal state of a living animal, which shows the clinical or pathological manifestation of an animal with an infectious or a non-infectious condition;

"disinfection" means the application, after thorough cleansing, of procedures intended to destroy the infectious or parasitic agents—

(a) of animal diseases, including zoonoses, and

(b) in premises, vehicles and different objects which may have been directly or indirectly contaminated;

"early detection system" means a system for the timely detection and identification of an incursion or emergence of diseases or infections in the country, or a zone or a compartment of it;

"emerging disease" means a new infection, causing a significant impact on animal or public health, resulting from —

(a) the evolution or change of an existing pathogenic agent,

(b) a known infection spreading to a new geographic area, or population, or

(c) a previously unrecognised pathogenic agent or disease diagnosed for the first time;

**"eradication"** means the elimination of a pathogenic agent or disease from the entire territory of The Gambia, or from a district or a village of The Gambia;

**"establishment"** means a facility or entity engaged in the manufacture, production, preparation, handling, importation, exportation, sale, storage, offer for sale, distribution, transfer, use for animals, animal products and by-products, veterinary drugs and biological products, feeds, feed ingredients and devices;

**"exporting country"** means the country of origin of commodities sent to The Gambia;

**"facilities"** include animal or veterinary laboratories, clinics and hospitals;

**"farm"** means any area, place or premises where animals are temporarily or permanently kept for rearing;

**"feed"** means any substance or product, including additives, whether processed, partially processed or unprocessed, which is intended to be used for oral feeding to animals;

**"feed ingredient"** means a component part or constituent of any combination or mixture making up a feed, whether or not it has a nutritional value in the animal's diet, including feed additives, ingredients of plant origin (including aquatic plants), terrestrial origin, aquatic animal origin or inorganic substances;

**"food"** means any substance, whether processed, semi-processed or raw, which is intended for human consumption;

**"food hygiene"** means all conditions and measures necessary to ensure safety and suitability of food at all stages of the food chain;

**"free zone"** means a zone in which, the absence of a specific infection or infestation in an animal population has been demonstrated in accordance with the relevant requirements of international standards;

**"fodder"** means hay or other substance commonly used as feed;

**"functions"** include powers and duties;

**"genetic materials"** include all hereditary material in the form of DNA or RNA in an animal's cells, tissues, organs or organism that determines the animal's composition;

**"Government"** means the Government of The Gambia;

**"hatching eggs"** means fertilised bird eggs, which are suitable for incubation and hatching;

**"hazard"** means a biological agent, a chemical agent or a physical agent in, or a condition of, an animal or animal product with the potential to cause an adverse health effect;

**"Head of the Veterinary Services"** means the veterinarian in charge of the Veterinary Services;

**"health-related matters"** include –

(a) animal, vector-borne and zoonotic disease diagnosis, treatment, prevention, control, eradication and disposal of animals through –

(i) bio-security plans, surveillance system and early detection system and mandatory reporting of important animal and zoonotic diseases;

(ii) monitoring and notification of notifiable, emerging and re-emerging animal diseases to control and eradicate the occurrence of risks that may cause harm to animal and human health, or

(iii) monitoring of animals, animal products and by-products, animal facilities, establishments, vehicles or vessels and other means of transport and other inanimate objects that come in contact with animals and animal products;

(b) food safety, directly or indirectly connected to food of animal origin;

(c) income generation connected to actions that relate to animals, and

(d) compensation for the slaughter of animals for the purpose of controlling animal diseases;

**"herd"** means a number of animals of one kind kept together under human control or a congregation of gregarious wild animals, which is usually regarded as an epidemiological unit;

**"importing country"** means The Gambia as the final destination to which commodities are sent;

**"international standards"** means the standards, norms and recommendations adopted by the appropriate internationally recognised standard-setting body in the area of animal health, such as the OIE, and includes standards contained in the Terrestrial Code, the Aquatic Code, the Terrestrial Manual, the Aquatic Manual and any other document officially issued by a standard-setting body recognised by The Gambia;

**"international trade"** includes the importation, exportation and transit of commodities;

**"international veterinary certificate"** means a certificate, which is issued in conformity with international standards, and describes the animal health or public health requirement which is fulfilled by an exported commodity;

**"listed disease"** means a disease, infection or infestation which is listed in international standards;

**"litter"** means straw or other substance commonly used for bedding or otherwise for animals;

**"livestock"** means domesticated animals raised in an agricultural setting to produce labour services and commodities such as meat, eggs, milk, fur, leather and wool;

**"meat"** means all edible parts of an animal;

**"meat products"** means meat that have been subjected to a treatment that irreversibly modifies their organoleptic and physiochemical characteristics;

**"Minister"** means the Minister responsible for the Veterinary Services, and **"Ministry"** shall be construed accordingly;

**"monitoring"** means the intermittent performance and analysis of routine measurements and observations, with the aim of detecting changes in the environment or health status of a population;

**"notifiable disease"** means a disease which –

(a) is listed by the Veterinary Services, and

(b) is to be brought to the attention of the Veterinary Services, in accordance with the prescribed procedures, as soon as it is detected or suspected;

**"notification"** means the procedure by which the Veterinary Services is informed, or the Veterinary Services informs the appropriate regional body, continental body or global body of the occurrence of an outbreak or disease or infection, according to the provisions on notification of diseases and epidemiological information indicated in international standards;

**"official control programme"** means a programme which is approved, and managed or supervised by the Veterinary Services for the purpose of controlling a vector, pathogen or disease by specific measures applied throughout The Gambia, or within a zone or a compartment of The Gambia;

**"official veterinarian"** means a veterinarian authorised by the Veterinary Services to perform certain designated official tasks associated with –

(a) animal health,

(b) public health,

(c) inspections of commodities of animal origin, and

(d) when appropriate, certification in conformity with the provisions on veterinary certification and its procedures in accordance with international standards;

**"official veterinary control"** includes the operations by which the Veterinary Services, knowing the location of animals and after taking appropriate actions to identify their owner or responsible keeper, is able to apply appropriate animal health measures, as required;

**"OIE"** means the World Organization for Animal Health, which is an intergovernmental organisation,

**"order"** means a lawful instruction by the Veterinary Services, which is served on an authorised officer or other person and requires strict compliance;

**"outbreak"** means the occurrence of cases of a disease in an epidemiological unit, at a level significantly higher than what is normally expected;

**"person"** includes an individual and a body corporate or unincorporated;

**"premises"** means a place where an animal is ordinarily kept either permanently or temporarily for any purpose and includes farms, stables, stockyards, livestock depots, exhibition and show barns, markets and aviaries;

**"primary production"** means the production, rearing or growing of animals and primary products including harvesting, milking and farmed animal production prior to slaughter;

**"protection zone"** means a zone where specific biosecurity and sanitary measures are implemented to prevent the entry of a pathogenic agent into a free region or zone from a neighbouring country or zone of a different animal health status;

**"quarantine"** means keeping an animal in isolation with no direct or indirect contact with other animals, to ensure that a specified pathogen is not transmitted outside the establishment while the animal is undergoing observation for a specified length of time and, if appropriate, testing and treatment;

**"quarantine station"** means an establishment where animals are quarantined, which is under the control of the Veterinary Services;

**"registration"** means the action by which information on animals, such as identification, animal health, movement, certification, epidemiology and establishments is collected, recorded, securely stored and made appropriately accessible and able to be utilised by the Veterinary Services;

**"risk"** means the likelihood of the occurrence and the likely magnitude of the biological and economic consequences of an adverse event or effect to animal or human health;

**"risk analysis"** means the process composed of hazard identification, risk assessment, risk management, and risk communication;

**"risk assessment"** means the evaluation of the likelihood and the biological and economic consequences of entry, establishment and spread of a hazard within The Gambia as an importing country;

**"risk management"** means the process, distinct from risk assessment, of weighing policy alternatives in consultation with interested parties, considering risk assessment and other legitimate factors, and if need be, selecting appropriate prevention and control options;

**"sanitary measure"** means a measure which is intended to protect animal or human health or life within The Gambia from risks arising from the entry, establishment or spread of a hazard;

**"slaughter"** means any procedure which causes the death of an animal by bleeding;

**"slaughterhouse"** or **"abattoir"** means premises used for the slaughter of animals to produce animal products and approved by the Veterinary Services or other competent authority recognised by the laws of The Gambia;

**"stamping-out"** means carrying out under the authority of the Veterinary Services, on confirmation of a disease –

(a) the killing of vaccinated or unvaccinated animals which are affected in a herd or are suspected of being affected in a herd, and

(b) where appropriate, the killing of vaccinated or unvaccinated animals in other herds which have been exposed to infection by direct animal to animal contact, or by indirect contact of a kind likely to cause the transmission of the causal pathogen,

(c) the disposal of carcasses or animal by-products by rendering, burning or burial, or by any other method which will eliminate the spread of infection through the carcasses or products of the animals killed, and

(d) the cleansing and disinfection of infected premises according to procedures defined in international standards,

**"surveillance"** means the systematic collection, collation, and analysis of information related to animal health and the timely dissemination of information to those who need to know so that action can be taken;

**"surveillance system"** means a method of surveillance that involves one or more component activities intended to generate data and information on the health, disease or zoonosis status of animal populations;

**"traceability"** means the ability to follow a food, a feed, a food-producing animal or a substance intended to be or expected to be incorporated into a food or a feed, through all stages of production, processing and distribution;

**"vaccination"** means the administration of a vaccine, in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions and the Terrestrial Manual, when relevant, with the intention of inducing immunity in an animal or a group of animals against one or more pathogenic elements;

**"vehicle"** or **"vessel"** includes a cart, a truck, a train, an aircraft, and a ship, which is used for carrying animals;

"veterinarian" means a person who is registered by the Gambia Veterinary Council to practice veterinary medicine or veterinary science in The Gambia;

"veterinary domain" means all the activities that are directly or indirectly related to animals, their products and by-products, which help to protect, maintain and improve the health and welfare of humans, including by means of the protection of animal health and animal welfare, and food safety;

"veterinary drug" means any substance applied or administered to an animal, for therapeutic, prophylactic or diagnostic purposes or for modification of physiological functions or behavior;

"veterinary para-professional" means a person who is registered by the Gambia Veterinary Council to carry out certain tasks delegated to him or her under the responsibility and direction of a veterinarian;

"Veterinary Services" means the technical arm of the Ministry, which is responsible for implementing animal health and animal welfare measures and international standards in The Gambia;

"zone" or "region" means a clearly defined part of the Gambian territory containing an animal population or sub-population with a distinct health status with respect to a specific disease for which the required surveillance, control and bio-security measures have been applied for the purpose of international trade; and

"zoonosis" means any disease or infection which is naturally transmissible from an animal to a human being and may be transmissible from a human being to an animal.

### 3. Application

This Act applies to all persons who directly or indirectly deal with animal health and animal welfare related matters.

## PART II – ADMINISTRATION OF THE ACT AND ANCILLARY MATTERS

### 4. Administration of the Act

(1) The Minister shall be responsible for the administration of this Act.

(2) The Veterinary Services shall administer the Act on behalf of the Minister.

## 5. Powers of the Veterinary Services

The Veterinary Services may –

- (a) institute any measure which it considers to be technically necessary for early detection and rapid response to the occurrence or threat of animal health, public health and animal welfare emergencies effectively within the territory of The Gambia;
- (b) place under official veterinary control and immediate holding, detention or segregation in a declared containment zone, within a period of twenty-one days or for a longer period of not more than thirty days, when necessary, for observation and examination, any animal with a diseased condition or animals for slaughter being brought by a person or being in that person's possession or control;
- (c) place under official veterinary control and immediate holding, any animal by-products, feeds, feed ingredients, feed supplements, feed additives, veterinary drugs, biological products and other objects or substances found or suspected to be infected or carriers of any notifiable diseases;
- (d) seize and confiscate any animal which is infected by, is suspected of, is deemed exposed to, or has come in contact with –
  - (i) diseased animals, animal parts, products, and by-products,
  - (ii) feeds, feed ingredients, feed supplements, feed additives, veterinary drugs or biological products suspected to be carriers of diseases,
  - (iii) any undocumented items or substances suspected to be carriers of diseases, or
  - (iv) any items or substances from unknown sources suspected to be carriers of diseases;
- (e) seize any animal which –
  - (i) is showing signs of a listed or notifiable disease,
  - (ii) is reasonably suspected to be infected with a notifiable disease,

- (iii) is a carrier of a notifiable diseases, or
- (iv) poses imminent danger, threat or injury to the overall animal health population in a declared disease-free zone, area or premises, and at any border post of The Gambia;
- (f) establish procedures to condemn and appropriately dispose of diseased animals or animals suspected to be infected with diseases and considered to be a great risk to the animal population or the public health;
- (g) obtain information, records and reports from any animal owner, establishment operator or private individual who possesses or maintains a system to allow the tracing, recall or withdrawal of diseased animals or affected animal products from the food chain;
- (h) establish an advisory committee for animal diseases and emergency and such other committees as may be deemed necessary to assist the Veterinary Services in the implementation of its programmes;
- (i) recommend to the Personnel Management Office appropriately qualified technical and professional persons for employment as officers of the Veterinary Services, for the effective implementation of this Act;
- (j) designate persons as authorised officers for the purpose of this Act;
- (k) constitute a taskforce or committee, which comprises technical officers from the Veterinary Services, officers from other relevant governmental bodies and representatives of stakeholders from the private sector, for the purpose of the control of the occurrence of disease; and
- (l) assign technical officers to take action pertaining to the implementation or verification of compliance with the veterinary legislation.

## 6. Residual powers of the Veterinary Services

The Veterinary Services shall exercise such other powers as may be conferred on it by this Act or any other enactment of the National Assembly.

## 7. Exercise of powers by the Head of the Veterinary Services

- (1) The Head of the Veterinary Services is the Chief Veterinary Officer of The Gambia and shall exercise the powers of the Veterinary Services to oversee its smooth functioning.
- (2) The Head of the Veterinary Services may delegate in writing, any of his or her functions under this Act to any other officer of the Veterinary Services at –
  - (a) the national and sub-national levels; and
  - (b) different technical or administrative levels.
- (3) The Head of the Veterinary Services shall require the officer to whom the function is delegated to –
  - (a) provide written reports on his or her performance of the delegate function at such frequencies as the Head of the Veterinary Services may decide; and
  - (b) consult with the Head of the Veterinary Services before acting on certain decisions.

## 8. Head of the Veterinary Services to advise the Minister

The Head of the Veterinary Services shall advise the Minister on all matters related to animal health and animal welfare –

- (a) where the health status of the animal population or the human population is in actual or imminent danger; and
- (b) surveillance reports and risk assessment on animal health and food safety indicate such danger.

## 9. Designation of authorised officers

The Veterinary Services may designate in writing a person as an authorised officer to implement this Act.

## 10. Functions of authorised officers

An authorised officer may, subject to the instruction or directive of the Veterinary Services, –

- (a) seize, destroy, bury or dispose of, in the prescribed manner any animal, carcass, animal product, feed, veterinary or biological products and animal waste materials suspected of, affected or which has been in contact with a contagious disease, an infectious disease or a notifiable disease;

- (b) enter a farm, an abattoir, a facility or premises to investigate, inspect, conduct tests, prevent and control a disease from spreading;
- (c) regulate or prohibit the movement of animals within the infected area;
- (d) declare a buffer zone;
- (e) order a person not to move any animal, animal products, feeds, animal waste materials without his or her authorisation;
- (f) issue a notice or an order and prescribe the means to control the spread of the disease;
- (g) require an animal to be vaccinated, dipped or sprayed or carry out other preventive measures against the disease, including disinfection;
- (h) undertake regular collection of relevant samples, such as animal carcass, fluids, blood, litter and specimens for laboratory examination to determine the cause of the disease and immune status of the animals;
- (i) cause an animal to be slaughtered or destroyed and perform ante-mortem and post-mortem examinations on a diseased animal;
- (j) apply quarantine measures to an area, a facility or premises when there is reasonable belief in an outbreak of an infectious disease, a contagious disease or a notifiable disease;
- (k) require an owner, a manager or other person rearing an animal, in possession of a diseased animal or an animal suspected of harboring a disease to produce the animal for testing to detect the occurrence of any particular disease;
- (l) enter an area or premises to inspect animals for sale, exhibition, race and other forms of recreation, or competition, which he or she reasonably believes to be infected with a disease;
- (m) prohibit the sale, or supervise the disposal of diseased animals or carcasses;

- (n) isolate, or require a person who owns or possesses animals within the infected area to isolate his or her animals from other animals or move such animals within twenty four hours from one place of the area to another place within the area or to a different place;
- (o) require every owner of animals to report to the Veterinary Services within twenty four hours, the death of an animal in a buffer zone to enable the Veterinary Services to determine whether the death was caused by an infectious disease, a contagious disease, a notifiable disease or a cause other than disease; and
- (p) perform such other functions as the Veterinary Services may deem appropriate for the control of diseases.

### PART III – QUARANTINE MEASURES

#### 11. Declaration of quarantine

- (1) The Veterinary Services may, in consultation with the Minister, by Order published in the Gazette, declare quarantine.
- (2) A quarantine Order shall –
  - (a) declare that a particular area, a particular premises or a particular zone is under quarantine;
  - (b) prescribe the conditions for declaring a quarantine;
  - (c) provide for the proper sealing of an area, a premises or a zone under quarantine;
  - (d) provide for the restriction of movement of animals, animal products, biological products and conveyances under quarantine; and
  - (e) specify the bearer of expenses relating to the maintenance of animals while under quarantine and the disposal of any animal that may die during quarantine.

#### 12. Duties of owners or persons in charge of animals

- (1) A person who owns or has in his or her possession, custody, control or charge, an animal infected with a notifiable disease shall –
  - (a) cause treatment to be applied to the infected animal by a veterinarian or veterinary para-professional;
  - (b) separate the infected animal from uninfected animals;

(c) separate any animal product suspected to be infected from uninfected animal products; and

(d) separate any contaminated materials from uncontaminated materials.

(2) A person who contravenes sub-section (1) commits an offence and is liable on conviction to a fine of not more than five thousand dalasis.

### 13. Sealing of infected premises

(1) Where the Veterinary Services has declared that a particular area, premises or zone is under quarantine, a person shall not remove any –

(a) animals;

(b) animal parts;

(c) animal by-products;

(d) feeds;

(e) feed ingredients;

(f) feed supplements;

(g) feed additives;

(h) veterinary drugs;

(i) biological products; and

(j) other materials or substances found or suspected to be infected or be carriers of any listed or notifiable disease,

found in that area, premises or zone unless an authorised officer has issued him or her with a signed permit for such removal and the area, premises or zone has been declared free from infection or disease.

(2) A person who contravenes sub-section (1) commits an offence and is liable on conviction to a fine of thirty thousand dalasis or imprisonment for six months or both.

### 14. Lifting of quarantine

The Veterinary Services may, in consultation with the Minister, by order published in the Gazette, lift the quarantine on a particular area, premises or zone, or a specific district, village or community that had been declared to be infected, when it has reasonable ground to believe that it is safe and infection has been controlled or eradicated.

### 15. Declaration of protection zone

The Veterinary Services may, in consultation with the Minister, by Order published in the Gazette, declare a particular area, a protection zone and specify –

(a) its limits; and

(b) the date from which, and the period during which, it shall remain closed to all unauthorised human, vehicular and animal traffic.

### 16. Declaration of disease-free area or zone

(1) The Veterinary Services may, in consultation with the Minister, may by Order published in the Gazette, declare a specific area or a specific zone and its border post free of a particular disease.

(2) The Veterinary Services shall issue standard operating procedures on declaring a specific area or zone and its border post free of a particular disease.

### 17. Disinfection measures

Where an infectious disease, a contagious disease or a listed or notifiable disease has occurred, the Government shall disinfect premises, including buildings and facilities, equipment and vehicles in the manner prescribed in the Regulations.

### 18. Stamping-out

(1) The Veterinary Services may order the stamping-out of animals affected, suspected, exposed or susceptible to infection in a herd to eliminate further spread of infection.

(2) The Veterinary Services shall issue standard operating procedures on the stamping-out of animals.

(c) separate any animal product suspected to be infected from uninfected animal products, and

(d) separate any contaminated materials from uncontaminated materials.

(2) A person who contravenes sub-section (1) commits an offence and is liable on conviction to a fine of not more than five thousand dalasis.

### 13. Sealing of infected premises

(1) Where the Veterinary Services has declared that a particular area, premises or zone is under quarantine, a person shall not remove any –

(a) animals;

(b) animal parts;

(c) animal by-products;

(d) feeds;

(e) feed ingredients;

(f) feed supplements;

(g) feed additives;

(h) veterinary drugs;

(i) biological products; and

(j) other materials or substances found or suspected to be infected or be carriers of any listed or notifiable disease,

found in that area, premises or zone unless an authorised officer has issued him or her with a signed permit for such removal and the area, premises or zone has been declared free from infection or disease.

(2) A person who contravenes sub-section (1) commits an offence and is liable on conviction to a fine of thirty thousand dalasis or imprisonment for six months or both.

### 14. Lifting of quarantine

The Veterinary Services may, in consultation with the Minister, by order published in the Gazette, lift the quarantine on a particular area, premises or zone, or a specific district, village or community that had been declared to be infected, when it has reasonable ground to believe that it is safe and infection has been controlled or eradicated.

### 15. Declaration of protection zone

The Veterinary Services may, in consultation with the Minister, by Order published in the Gazette, declare a particular area, a protection zone and specify –

(a) its limits; and

(b) the date from which, and the period during which, it shall remain closed to all unauthorised human, vehicular and animal traffic.

### 16. Declaration of disease-free area or zone

(1) The Veterinary Services may, in consultation with the Minister, may by Order published in the Gazette, declare a specific area or a specific zone and its border post free of a particular disease.

(2) The Veterinary Services shall issue standard operating procedures on declaring a specific area or zone and its border post free of a particular disease.

### 17. Disinfection measures

Where an infectious disease, a contagious disease or a listed or notifiable disease has occurred, the Government shall disinfect premises, including buildings and facilities, equipment and vehicles in the manner prescribed in the Regulations.

### 18. Stamping-out

(1) The Veterinary Services may order the stamping-out of animals affected, suspected, exposed or susceptible to infection in a herd to eliminate further spread of infection.

(2) The Veterinary Services shall issue standard operating procedures on the stamping-out of animals.

**19. Seizure, destruction and disposal of animals, etc.**

The Veterinary Services may order the seizure, destruction or disposal of—

- (a) any animal, carcass, animal products, fodder, infected materials, semen or embryo suspected to be infected with a listed or notifiable disease; and
- (b) any banned, confiscated, unregistered, or counterfeit veterinary drugs and veterinary biological products.

**20. Standard operating procedures at seaports, airports, etc.**

The Veterinary Services shall issue standard operating procedures on quarantine at each seaport, airport and official border post in The Gambia.

**PART IV – DISEASE CONTROL****21. Lists of diseases**

(1) The Veterinary Services shall publish in the Gazette -

- (a) a list of diseases, infections or infestations which are listed in international standards (listed diseases); and
- (b) a list of diseases, infections or standards which may not be listed in international standards, but which the Veterinary Services consider national priorities (non-listed diseases).

(2) A list shall be deemed to have come into operation on the 1<sup>st</sup> day of January in the year of its publication in the Gazette.

(3) The Veterinary Services may bring the list of diseases, infections or infestations which are listed in international standards (listed diseases) up to date in line with such amendments as may be made by the relevant issuing body from time to time.

(4) The Veterinary Services may amend the list of diseases, infections or standards which may not be listed in international standards, but which the Veterinary Services consider national priorities (non-listed diseases) –

- (a) by deleting a particular disease from the list when the Veterinary Services determines that the disease is no longer a threat to The Gambia; or
- (b) by inserting other notifiable diseases, when the Veterinary Services considers it necessary.

(5) A person shall notify the Veterinary Services of, and immediately report to it, the occurrence of –

- (a) a listed disease; and
- (b) a non-listed disease, which the Veterinary Services considers a national priority.

**22. Control of notifiable diseases**

The Veterinary Services shall ensure control of a notifiable disease through –

(a) an early detection system, by way of both active and passive surveillance, which shall include the following characteristics –

- (i) representative coverage of target animal populations by field services,
- (ii) the ability to undertake effective disease investigation and reporting,

(iii) access to laboratories capable of diagnosing and differentiating relevant diseases,

(iv) a training programme for veterinarians, veterinary para-professionals, livestock owners, livestock keepers and others involved in handling animals for detecting and reporting unusual animal health incidents,

(v) the legal obligation of private veterinarians, veterinary para-professionals, auxiliaries and others involved in handling animals to report to the Veterinary Services, and

(vi) a national chain of command;

(b) a rapid reaction system to deal with the occurrence of the identified disease as expediently as possible, within a reasonable timeframe, and

(c) taking appropriate measures to control the disease, including treatment, vaccination, proper destruction and disposal of carcasses, animal products, feeds, animal waste materials and any other items associated with the disease within an infected area.

**23. Disease reporting requirements**

(1) An animal owner or producer, a livestock manager or operator, a veterinary consultant, officer or para-professional, and any other person involved in handling animals shall immediately and by the quickest means possible report to the local veterinary authority –

(a) the appearance of any notifiable disease, even prior to its actual existence and confirmation through laboratory examinations; and

(b) the occurrence of any disease outbreak or infection.

(2) After receiving the report, the local veterinary authority shall report to the Veterinary Services.

(3) A person who contravenes sub-section (1) commits an offence and is liable on conviction to a fine of not more than twenty-five thousand dalasis and, in default, imprisonment for a term of not more than six months.

**24. Power to kill and conduct post-mortem examination**

The Veterinary Services may, where there is reasonable ground to believe or suspect that an animal has died of a contagious disease, an infectious disease or a notifiable disease, –

(a) move other animals from the premises;

(b) immediately kill or cause to be killed one of such animals; and

(c) conduct a post-mortem examination of the body of the animal killed to determine the cause of the believed or suspected disease.

**25. Disposal of diseased animals, etc.**

(1) A person shall not destroy or dispose of a diseased animal, its carcass or an infected material, without the supervision of a duly authorised officer.

(2) A person who contravenes sub-section (1) commits an offence and is liable on conviction to a fine of five thousand dalasis or imprisonment for six months or both.

**26. Compulsory vaccination of animals**

(1) A person shall, when the Veterinary Services requires it, allow the Veterinary Services to vaccinate his or her animal as a preventive procedure, a control procedure or an eradication procedure against diseases and infections.

(2) A person who contravenes sub-section (1) commits an offence and is liable on conviction to a fine of not less than five thousand dalasis and not more than one hundred thousand dalasis or imprisonment for not less than nine months and not more than eighteen months or both.

**27. Animal identification system, etc.**

The Veterinary Services shall –

(a) develop and implement an animal identification system;

(b) register establishments and facilities; and

(c) after consultation with livestock stakeholders, prepare and implement a farm classification system,

to ensure animal traceability.

**28. Notification of international organisations on occurrence of a listed disease**

The Veterinary Services shall –

(a) immediately inform the appropriate global, continental and regional organisations, through their respective procedures, on the occurrence of a listed disease and report the appropriate measures taken to prevent the spread of the notifiable disease until resolution of the situation; and

(b) where necessary, issue standard operating procedures on reporting to the appropriate global, continental and regional organisations.

**29. Animal disease diagnosis and health surveillance.**

(1) The Veterinary Services shall develop guidelines based on surveillance data, including guidelines on –

(a) field observations;

(b) disease reporting;

(c) control measures;

(d) and contingency plan;

(e) slaughterhouse inspection;

(f) testing;

- (g) laboratory investigation records,
- (h) farm production records, and
- (i) wildlife data.

(2) The Veterinary Services shall use the guidelines to generate information for early detection and diagnosis of suspected animal diseases or confirmed animal diseases.

### 30. Risk management

(1) The Veterinary Services shall, when undertaking risk management, carry out hazard identification, risk assessment, and risk communication.

(2) The Veterinary Services shall issue standard operating procedures on carrying out risk management in accordance with international standards.

### 31. Animal welfare

The Minister shall, in consultation with the Veterinary Services, make Regulations pertaining to –

- (a) the establishment and operation of facilities that provide proper care, feeding, breeding, treatment, transport, housing, handling and slaughtering of, and research on, animals, and
- (b) the welfare of animals under human control, including clearly defined and delimited freedoms –
  - (i) from hunger, malnutrition and thirst,
  - (ii) from fear and distress,
  - (iii) from physical and thermal discomfort,
  - (iv) from pain, injury and disease, and
  - (v) to express normal patterns of behavior.

### 32. Contingency plan for trans-boundary animal diseases, etc.

The Veterinary Services shall prepare a contingency plan for the control or eradication of the major trans-boundary animal diseases, emerging diseases and re-emerging diseases, which shall include –

- (a) an early warning component,

- (b) a rapid reaction component,
- (c) a long-term control component, and
- (d) a resource mobilisation component.

### 33. Registration of farms and their inspection

(1) The owner of a farm shall register it with the Veterinary Services.

(2) The Minister, in consultation with the Veterinary Services, shall make Regulations pertaining to the registration of farms and carrying out inspection of farms by the Veterinary Services.

### 34. Assistance from forces of public order, etc.

(1) The Veterinary Services may, through the Minister, request the assistance of the Gambia Police Force, the National Environment Agency and other public sector entity in the implementation of its programmes.

(2) The Programmes for which assistance may be requested include –

- (a) animal disease prevention;
- (b) animal disease control;
- (c) animal disease eradication;
- (d) disposal of diseased animals;
- (e) carrying out sanitary measures including –
  - (i) the imposition of quarantine,
  - (ii) inspection,
  - (iii) slaughter, and
  - (iv) organising roadblocks.

### 35. Control of movement of animals and animal by-products

(1) A person shall not import, or move within the territory of The Gambia, an animal or an animal by-product without a permit issued by the Veterinary Services and in compliance with the conditions imposed on the permit.

(2) A person who contravenes sub-section (1) commits an offence and is liable on conviction to a fine of twenty-five thousand dalasis or imprisonment for six months or both and seizure, destruction or disposal of the animal or animal by-product.

**36. Veterinary health certificate and permit**

(1) A person shall not import, or export, an animal or an animal by-product, unless he or she obtains –

- (a) a veterinary health certificate signed by an officer of the Veterinary Services of the exporting country or of The Gambia, as the case may be; and
- (b) an import permit or an export permit issued by the relevant authority.

(2) A person who contravenes sub-section (1) commits an offence and is liable on conviction to a fine of twenty-five thousand dalasis or imprisonment for six months or both.

**37. Duties of animal transporters and shippers**

A person shall not transport or ship animals or animal by-products into The Gambia unless he or she has –

- (a) notified the Veterinary Services of the date and time of the vessel or vehicle transporting the animals or animal by-products;
- (b) thoroughly cleaned and disinfected the vehicle or vessel to be used to transport or ship the animals or animal by-products in accordance with international standards;
- (c) submitted a veterinary health certificate from the competent authority of the exporting country, declaring –
  - (i) the country of origin of the animals or animal by-products;
  - (ii) the age, sex, breed and identification tag of each animal, where applicable;
  - (iii) the name and address of the exporter and the location of the exporter's premises;
  - (iv) that the animals or animal by-products are and have been free from disease; or
  - (v) that the animals or animal by-products come from an area, a zone or a compartment where animal disease is under control; and
  - (vi) that the animals have undergone immunisation against specific diseases;

- (d) provided an adequate supply of food and water to the animals while being transported or shipped and during quarantine (as the case may be);
- (e) borne all expenses relating to the animals' maintenance while under quarantine and the disposal of any animal that may die during quarantine;
- (f) paid the quarantine fee and such other fees in such amounts as may be prescribed under this Act;
- (g) immediately reported in the prescribed manner to an authorised officer, when he or she has reasonable ground to believe or suspect that any animal has become infected with a contagious disease, an infectious disease or a notifiable or listed disease;
- (h) separated affected animals from uninfected animals and subjected the animals to such tests as may be deemed necessary under the circumstances;
- (i) applied the prescribed treatment or medication to affected animals under the supervision of the Veterinary Services when deemed necessary;
- (j) borne the expenses incurred in applying the treatment or the medication for the account of the importer or owner;
- (k) not removed any animal, animal product, feeds, biological products or animal waste materials from any place so ordered to be detained for quarantine purposes; and
- (l) complied fully with the provisions of this Act.

**38. Reference laboratory**

(1) The Veterinary Services may establish a reference laboratory to carry out the analysis of official samples of the Veterinary Services and analyses required under the veterinary legislation.

(2) The Veterinary Services may use such other reference laboratories as may be available within or outside of it.

(3) The Veterinary Services shall prepare guidelines on the accreditation of reference laboratories in The Gambia and the recognition of reference laboratories outside of it.

**PART V – FOOD SAFETY****39. Application of principles of food law**

The Veterinary Services shall apply the principles of food law in the Food Safety and Quality Act when it –

- (a) prepares or implements Regulations on food hygiene pertaining to animals; and
- (b) monitors or evaluates the production, manufacture, transport and distribution of feed given to food-producing animals, including primary production of animals through to final consumption.

[Part VI of the Food Safety and Quality Act 2011]

**40. Regulatory food safety assurance programmes**

The Veterinary Services shall, in consultation with the Food Safety and Quality Authority, prepare and implement such food safety assurance programmes as may be prescribed by Regulations.

**41. Collaboration with Food Safety and Quality Authority, etc.**

The Veterinary Services shall collaborate with the Food Safety and Quality Authority, public health officers and any other relevant institution to –

- (a) effectively control hygiene;
- (b) avoid adverse human health and economic consequences of food-borne illness and food-borne injury; and
- (c) ensure that food of animal origin is safe for human consumption.

**PART VI – IMPORT CONTROLS AND ANCILLARY MATTERS****42. Border post requirements**

(1) A person shall not import animals, animal by-products, meat and meat products, feeds and feed ingredients, veterinary drugs and biological products or such other items unless he or she –

- (a) presents them for such close inspection, examination procedures and quarantine measure as the Veterinary Services may deem necessary; and

(b) complies with the import requirements as provided for in the laws of The Gambia.

(2) The import requirements include –

- (a) a certificate of clearance issued by the Veterinary Services obtained prior to importation; and

[section 38 (1) (d) of the Gambia Livestock Marketing Agency Act, 2008]

- (b) a veterinary health certificate or its equivalent from the country of origin.

**43. Quarantine stations for imported animals**

(1) A person shall not remove or unload an imported animal without the consent of the Veterinary Services.

(2) The Veterinary Services, in consultation with the Minister, may establish quarantine stations to accommodate and contain imported animals of suspected outbreak of the listed and non-listed diseases from the origin of imported animals.

(3) The Veterinary Services shall collect fees that is commensurate to the services that they are rendering at the Quarantine station for imported animals.

**44. Restriction on imports**

(1) The Minister may, in consultation with the Veterinary Services, request the Government to place a temporary ban on imports of animals and products of animal origin following a risk assessment or risk analysis.

(2) Where a shipment of animals is in transit in The Gambia from a country that has an outbreak of a notifiable or listed disease, the Veterinary Services shall apply a strict bio-security plan with its inherent measures to that shipment.

**45. Disease investigations**

The Veterinary Services shall conduct investigations, including examination and diagnostic testing, to determine the occurrence of any specified disease.

#### 46. Contaminated shipment

If the Veterinary Services finds or reasonably suspects a shipment of animals, animal products, animal by-products, veterinary drugs, biological products, genetic materials or feeds to be –

- (a) infected or contaminated with a notifiable disease, a contagious disease or an infectious disease; or
- (b) a potential vector carrier of a disease,

it shall immediately condemn and authorise the seizure and appropriate disposal of that shipment to prevent the spread of such disease in The Gambia.

#### 47. Undocumented shipment

(1) A person shall not unload a shipment of animals, animal products, animal by-products, veterinary drugs, biological products or feeds, unless he or she has obtained proper health related documents for that shipment.

(2) A person who contravenes sub-section (1) commits an offence and is liable on conviction to a fine of not less than seventy-five percent of the value of the consignment and imprisonment for not less than six months and denial of entry, seizure, confiscation and destruction of the shipment that is unloaded.

#### 48. Trans-shipment

(1) A person who is trans-shipping in containers, animals, animal products, animal by-products, veterinary drugs, biological products, genetic materials or feeds from one vehicle or vessel to another vehicle or vessel while in transit in The Gambia, shall ensure that the seals of all containers remain intact and unbroken until the containers reach their final destination.

(2) Notwithstanding sub-section (1), the Veterinary Services shall apply a strict bio-security plan with its inherent measures to every trans-shipment of animals, animal products, animal by-products, veterinary drugs, biological products, genetic materials or feeds, whether they are being transhipped in containers or otherwise.

#### 49. Duties of law enforcement officers

(1) All law enforcement officers, such as police officers and customs officials shall enforce all lawful orders given or made by the Veterinary Services pursuant to this Act.

(2) In particular a law enforcement officer may –

- (a) stop and detain any person seen or found committing an offence under this Act;
- (b) search any vehicle or vessel on which an offence has been committed, is being committed or is about to be committed;
- (c) arrest without warrant any person who obstructs or impedes him or her or assists to obstruct or impede him or her when carrying out a lawful order of the Veterinary Services.

### PART VII – INTERNATIONAL TRADE

#### 50. International certification

(1) The Veterinary Services shall, in compliance with international standards, issue international veterinary certificates, including international health certificates and permits.

(2) A veterinarian who is not an officer of the Veterinary Services may apply in writing to the Head of the Veterinary Services for authorisation to issue international health certificates.

(3) The Veterinary Services may authorise in writing a veterinarian who is not an officer of the Veterinary Services to issue an international health certificate after conducting a clinical examination of an animal.

#### 51. Equivalence of sanitary measures

(1) The Veterinary Services shall enter into consultations with other relevant stakeholders to formulate and implement sanitary measures to protect human health and animal health from any damage or loss caused by the entry, establishment or spread of a disease, in accordance with international standards.

(2) Notwithstanding sub-section (1), where the Veterinary Services considers that a sanitary measure proposed by an exporting country achieves the same level of protection as The Gambia's sanitary measure, it may approve its implementation.

#### 52. Notification of changes to sanitary measures

The Veterinary Services shall notify the appropriate international organisation dealing with sanitary measures of any change to a sanitary measure of The Gambia's animal health, animal welfare and food safety Regulations that may affect trade, to protect the interests of consumers and trading partners.

**53. Traceability**

The Veterinary Services shall establish identification and traceability schemes on live animals and products of animal origin through the application of principles stipulated in international standards at the farm level and at the food processing and distribution levels to ensure public health and public safety.

**54. Animal markets and other gatherings**

The Minister may, in consultation with the Veterinary Services, make Regulations to prevent disease transmission in livestock markets and such other gatherings, including –

- (a) procedures for cleaning and disinfection; and
- (b) animal welfare measures.

**55. Zoning and compartmentalisation**

The Veterinary Services –

- (a) may apply to the appropriate international organisation for recognition of disease free- zones in The Gambia;
- (b) shall implement appropriate measures to maintain The Gambia's disease-free zones based on clearly defined physical or geographical boundaries; and
- (c) shall apply surveillance, control and bio-security measures to compartments in accordance with international standards for the appropriate animal disease.

**56. Collaborative review of policies and Regulations**

The Veterinary Services shall collaborate with the Food Safety and Quality Authority, the Medicines Control Agency and other relevant stakeholders to review from time to time, policies and Regulations on animal health, animal welfare, food safety pertaining to animals, feeds, veterinary products, genetic materials and biological products.

**PART VIII – REAGENTS, FEEDS, GENETIC MATERIALS, VETERINARY DRUGS AND BIOLOGICAL PRODUCTS****57. Regulations under this Part**

(1) The Minister may, in consultation with the Veterinary Services, make Regulations which prescribe general measures pertaining to veterinary medicines and biologicals, including –

- (a) a definition of veterinary medicines and biologicals and any specific exclusions;

- (b) the importation, manufacture, distribution and usage of veterinary medicines and biologicals; and
- (c) commerce in veterinary medicines and biologicals.

(2) Notwithstanding sub-section (1), the Minister may, in consultation with the Veterinary Services, also make Regulations specifically to address the following matters –

- (a) raw materials for use in veterinary medicines and biologicals;
- (b) authorisation of veterinary medicines and biologicals;
- (c) quality of veterinary medicines and biologicals;
- (d) establishments that produce, store and wholesale veterinary medicines and biologicals; and
- (e) retailing, use and traceability of veterinary medicines and biologicals.

**58. Importation of reagents, feeds, genetic materials, veterinary drugs and biological products**

(1) A person shall not import any reagent, feed, genetic material, veterinary drug or biological product unless he or she possesses an import permit issued by the Veterinary Services for that feed, veterinary drug or biological product.

(2) Where a disease occurs in a foreign country while feeds, veterinary drugs and biological products being shipped are in-transit in that country, the Veterinary Services shall apply a strict bio-security plan with its inherent measures to that shipment when it arrives in The Gambia.

**59. Prohibition on the use of reagents, vaccines, genetic materials, veterinary drugs and biological products**

Where the Veterinary Services considers that any reagent, vaccine, genetic material, veterinary drug or biological product is a risk to the health and welfare of humans and animals, it may prohibit its use by Order published in the Gazette.

**60. Establishment of a veterinary feed analysis laboratory**

(1) The Veterinary Services shall establish a veterinary feed analysis laboratory to regulate the production, manufacture, processing, storage, transportation, distribution and marketing of feeds, feed stuffs, feed supplements and other feed products.

(2) The Minister may, in consultation with the Veterinary Services, may make such Regulations as may be required for the effective implementation of sub-section (1).

## PART IX – FINANCIAL AND REPORTING PROVISIONS

### 61. Establishment of the Animal Disease Fund

(1) There is established by this Act, an Animal Disease Compensation and Eradication Fund, which shall be funded through moneys appropriated to it by the National Assembly and other lawful means.

(2) The Fund shall be used to –

(a) compensate the owners of animals for the loss of animals or things which have been destroyed or otherwise disposed of, pursuant to quarantine control measures in the prevention, control and eradication of notifiable diseases, emerging diseases, re-emerging diseases, exotic diseases and zoonotic diseases; and

(b) cover for any administrative expenses incurred in implementing sub-section (2) (a).

### 62. Coverage of compensation

(1) The Veterinary Services shall only compensate the owner of an animal for the loss of an animal in a herd exposed to an infection that –

(a) is infected or reasonably suspected of being infected; and

(b) has been ordered to be killed by the Veterinary Services or an authorised officer.

(2) Notwithstanding sub-section (1), the Veterinary Services shall not compensate the owner of an animal for the loss of an animal that has died from a disease.

### 63. Compensable amount

(1) The owner of an animal which has been killed shall be compensated for –

(a) not less than fifty percent of the appraised market value of the animal killed;

(b) labour incurred in the disposal of the animal killed;

(c) materials used in the cleaning and disinfection of the place where the animal has been killed; and

(d) any other reasonable expenses incurred to restrict and contain the spread of infection of the disease.

(2) The salvaged value of any animal ordered to be killed shall be deducted from the compensable amount.

### 64. Claims and payment of compensation

The Minister shall, after consultation by the Veterinary Services with the relevant stakeholders, make Regulations pertaining to claims and payment of compensation.

### 65. Estimates, accounts and audit

(1) The Veterinary Services shall keep proper records and books of accounts of the income and expenditure of, and transfers from, the Animal Disease Compensation and Eradication Fund

(2) The Veterinary Services shall, in respect of each financial year, prepare a statement of accounts in respect of the Animal Disease Compensation and Eradication Fund.

(3) The Veterinary Services shall, within three months after the end of each financial year, submit the statement of accounts of the Animal Disease Compensation and Eradication Fund to the Auditor General for audit.

(4) The audited accounts of the Animal Disease Compensation and Eradication Fund and the Auditor General's report on those accounts shall form part of the Auditor General's overall annual report to the National Assembly.

### 66. Annual report

(1) The Veterinary Services shall, within two months after the end of each financial year, submit to the Minister, an annual report dealing generally with the activities and operations of the Veterinary Services within that financial year.

(2) The report shall include –

(a) a statement of the income, source of income and application of the moneys of the Veterinary Services; and

(b) information relating to the operation of the Veterinary Services.

(3) The Minister shall, not later than three months after the end of the financial year, cause the report to be laid before the National Assembly.

#### **PART X – OFFENCES AND PENALTIES**

##### **67. Obstructing an authorised officer**

(1) A person who willfully obstructs an authorised officer in the performance of his or her functions commits an offence and is liable on conviction to a fine of not less than fifty thousand dalasis and not more than one hundred and fifty thousand dalasis or imprisonment for six months or both.

(2) A person who commits an offence under sub-section (1) may be arrested without warrant by a police officer.

##### **68. Making false or misleading statements**

(1) A person who, for the purpose of applying for a permit, a certificate, or registration with the Veterinary Services knowingly –

- (a) makes or attempts to make any false statements or representations in speech or in writing; or
- (b) produces or furnishes or causes to be produced or furnished any document or information which is false in a material particular,

shall be banned from acquiring a permit or a certificate and shall not be registered by the Veterinary Services.

(2) A person who, for the purpose of making a claim for the payment of compensation, knowingly –

- (a) makes or attempts to make any false statements or representations in speech or in writing; or
- (b) uses a fraudulent or counterfeit, certificate or permit,

commits an offence, and is liable on conviction to a fine of not less than fifty thousand dalasis and not more than one hundred and fifty thousand dalasis or imprisonment for six months or both.

##### **69. General penalty**

A person who commits an offence under this Act or such Regulations as may be made under it for which a penalty has not been prescribed in the offence-creating provision is liable on conviction to a fine of ten thousand dalasis or imprisonment for six months or both.

#### **PART XII – MISCELLANEOUS**

##### **70. Collection of data and sharing of data**

(1) The Veterinary Services shall –

- (a) collect data in general; and
- (b) analyse epidemiological data to determine the disease status of The Gambia for monitoring purposes.

(2) The Veterinary Service may share the data with such regional and international bodies as it may deem necessary.

##### **71. Information system**

The Veterinary Services shall –

- (a) collect, compile, store and retrieve information, which will serve as linkages and databases; and
- (b) establish appropriate safeguards to prevent the loss of data, such as a back-up system.

##### **72. Establishment of a rapid alert system and designation of contact person**

(1) The Veterinary Services may, after consultation with the Minister –

- (a) establish a network for a rapid alert system with the international community for the notification of a direct or indirect risk to human health derived from food or feed; and
- (b) designate a focal person for The Gambia.

(2) The Veterinary Services shall designate as a focal person a member of the network, who –

- (a) is a veterinarian; and
- (b) has at least ten years work experience in a public or private Veterinary Services institution.

## (3) The focal person shall –

- (a) coordinate, implement and evaluate policies, programmes and activities of the network for rapid alert system;
- (b) supervise the investigation of any –
  - (i) foodborne diseases in food products of animal origins,
  - (ii) direct hazard or indirect hazard in the food or feed of the animal production phase of the food chain, and
  - (iii) matters relating to national food security and safety;
- (c) notify the appropriate Government ministries, Veterinary Services and agencies and the appropriate international organisations of the findings of any investigations carried out pursuant to paragraph (b);
- (d) provide a result oriented annual work programme and ad-hoc, quarterly and annual reports ; and
- (e) advise the Veterinary Services on issues related to hazards from food or feed significant to human health.

**73. Standard operating procedures generally**

Any standard operating procedure issued by the Veterinary Services under this Act shall specify matters including –

- (a) the objective of the standard operating procedure;
- (b) the effective date of the standard operating procedure,
- (c) the date of the last update and approval by the Minister of the standard operating procedure;
- (d) any equipment and materials required;
- (e) any methodology to be followed;
- (f) the steps and technical procedures to be followed; and
- (g) counterchecking measures for the standard operating procedure.

**74. Status of international standards**

## (1) Where –

- (a) this Act contains express provisions pertaining to an animal health or an animal welfare related matter, the Veterinary Services shall rely entirely on the Act; and
  - (b) this Act does not contain express provisions or sufficient provisions pertaining to an animal health or animal welfare related matter, the Veterinary Services may have recourse to the relevant international standards.
- (2) For the avoidance of doubt, this Act and the international standards referred to in it are complimentary.

**75. Inconsistency with other laws**

Where a provision of this Act is inconsistent with the provision of any other law relating to livestock matters, the provision of this Act shall prevail, and that other provision shall, to the extent of the inconsistency, be void.

**76. Regulations**

- (1) The Minister may make Regulations generally for the better carrying into effect of the provisions of this Act and to provide for any other matters necessary for its effective implementation.
- (2) Regulations made by the Minister shall prescribe the fees and charges for services rendered by the Veterinary Services.

**77. Repeal and savings**

- (1) The Diseases of Animals Act is repealed.

[Cap. 62:03]

- (2) Notwithstanding the repeal –

- (a) any Regulations made under the repealed Act and in force at the commencement of this Act shall be deemed to have been made under this Act and shall continue in force, so far as they may not be rendered inapplicable by this Act, until other provisions shall have been made under this Act, and
- (b) any order duly given, any document duly made or anything duly done by any person under the repealed Act shall remain valid, so far as they are not invalidated by this Act, until other provisions are made under this Act.

Animal Health Act, 2023

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PASSED in the National Assembly this 21<sup>st</sup> day of December, in the year of Our Lord Twenty Twenty Three.



M. A. Sise

*Clerk of the National Assembly.*

THIS PRINTED IMPRESSION has been carefully compared by me with the Bill which has passed in the National Assembly, and found by me to be a true and correct copy of the said Bill.



M. A. Sise

*Clerk of the National Assembly.*