WVA POSITION ON
GLOBAL VETERINARY DAY-ONE COMPETENCES

INTRODUCTION
Day-One Competences are defined as the combination of knowledge, skills, experience, attitudes, and behaviours that new veterinary graduates need to possess at graduation to enable them to provide adequate veterinary care for their patients and clients and to solve problems that are unique to veterinary medicine.

THE ROLE OF VETERINARIANS
New graduate veterinarians should be able to perform according to society’s expectations.

Veterinarians play a central role in the relationship between animals, animal owners, and society. This role is based on their scientific training, knowledge, practical skills, and awareness of professional ethics. Veterinarians must be objective, independent, and impartial. There should be a clear distinction between the roles of veterinarians and those of veterinary para-professionals, who fulfil an important and supportive role.

EVOLVING VETERINARY EDUCATION
In view of the role of veterinarians, the following three issues are important to consider:

1. Ensuring minimum requirements for veterinary medical education;
2. Development of professional expectations for veterinary training;
3. Ensuring societal expectations are met for new veterinary graduates.

Why are Day-One Competences needed?

1. Ensuring minimum educational requirements
The most important educational issues for veterinary graduates include: control of major diseases of domestic animals to ensure food safety and public health, ensuring good animal health and welfare, assisting in control of zoonotic diseases, and conducting research on projects important to animal health and welfare, and public health, including issues related to environmental and eco-system health.

2. Development of professional expectations for veterinary training
The veterinary profession requires a level of education and training that ensures Day-One Competences of new graduates whilst recognizing that new graduates will require ongoing support and mentoring by experienced colleagues, and continuing professional
education to further develop their skills and knowledge. Veterinary colleges must provide graduates with a basic level of knowledge, behaviours, attitudes, and practical skills as well as the ability to access and critique new information and apply it in a real-life setting. A desire for lifelong learning must also be instilled. Day-One Competences are the beginning of professional competence.

3. Ensuring societal expectations are met for new veterinary graduates
The role of the veterinarian in society is to act as a link between animals, animal owners, and society, as a whole, including consumers. Citizens should be able to rely on a high standard of veterinary education and professionalism. Many people do not fully understand or recognize the entire scope of veterinary responsibilities, including those related to public health. Veterinarians should better communicate the full scope of their contributions to the health and welfare of animals and people.

DAY-ONE COMPETENCES
Adequacy of the curriculum content should be assessed by objective outcomes both during and at the conclusion of the veterinary educational program. By the end of the program of education, veterinary students should be able to:

➢ Understand biological principles and mechanisms underlying animal health and disease, from molecular and cellular levels through to individual animals and populations;

➢ Understand normal physiologic function, homeostasis, pathophysiology, and the natural history and manifestations of important animal diseases, both domestic and foreign;

➢ Obtain adequate case histories, and properly store and retrieve medical information;

➢ Communicate effectively with clients, colleagues, and authorities;

➢ Understand and apply the theory and practice of medicine and surgery to a broad range of species. This must include disease prevention, the ability to apply and interpret physical and laboratory diagnostic methods including diagnostic imaging, diagnostic pathology, biosecurity, therapeutic interventions including surgery, responsible use of medicines, patient management, and care and welfare of individual animals and populations;

➢ Understand and apply principles of epidemiology, zoonosis, food safety, the interrelationship of animals and the environment, and the contribution of the veterinarian to public health;

➢ Understand and assess animal husbandry systems in which they may work, and the factors limiting animal health, welfare and production within these systems;

➢ Demonstrate professional ethics, including their legal responsibilities, and deliver services to the public in a professional manner;

➢ Possess the knowledge, skills, values, attitudes, and behaviours necessary to responsibly address the health and wellbeing of animals in the context of ever-changing societal expectations, including the application to One Health principles;
➢ Use their knowledge to investigate animal health and production problems and continue to seek new knowledge to provide high quality veterinary care. That is, recognize the need for lifelong learning and improvement as a part of their professional culture and responsibility.

Even when the veterinary educational programme fulfils these objectives, new graduates will experience gaps in their practical skills and knowledge needed for day to day veterinary medicine, and they may lack experience in practice management. These can be reasons for a difficult transition from education to practice and speak to a need for continued mentoring and continuing education post-graduation.

CONCLUSIONS.

In terms of:

1. **Ensuring minimum requirements for veterinary medical education**
Veterinarians should graduate with most of the attitudes, skills, values, behaviours, and knowledge required to practice veterinary medicine. They will have undertaken most of the basic technical procedures and will have a high level of theoretical knowledge, as well as strong ethical training and an instillation of appropriate behaviours, but new graduates will need ongoing practical experience and continuing professional development to hone their skills and knowledge to the level required in the practicing veterinary profession.

2. **Development of professional expectations for veterinary training.**
The profession has the right to expect that new graduates will have the basic skills and knowledge required to practice veterinary medicine in any form, but must also recognize that new graduates will need assistance and mentoring in their early career. The WVA agrees that Day-One Competences are the starting competences, which, if new graduates are given reasonable support, will allow them to rapidly develop into competent professionals who will meet the needs of the profession and society.

3. **Ensuring societal expectations are met for new graduates.**
Society has the right to expect a high standard of veterinary care and expertise whether their animals are seen by a new graduate or a more experienced veterinarian. A new graduate, given appropriate mentoring and support, must be able to meet this requirement.