



Published Date: 2020-06-10 21:02:36 CEST

Subject: PRO/AH/EDR> COVID-19 update (251): Netherlands (NB, LI) animal, farmed mink, spread, culling

Archive Number: 20200610.7453845

CORONAVIRUS DISEASE 2019 UPDATE (251): NETHERLANDS (NORTH BRABANT, LIMBURG) ANIMAL, FARMED MINK, SPREAD, CULLING

A ProMED-mail post

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Date: Tue 9 Jun 2020

Source: A letter from the Ministers of Health and of Agriculture to the Dutch House of Representatives, reference no. 1701824-206628-PG a [in Dutch, trans., edited]

<https://tinyurl.com/y8vy3z3w>

In our letter of 3 Jun [2020] last, we informed you about our policy with regard to infected mink farms, and we have provided an overview of the latest findings from mink companies. With this letter we inform your Chamber about the current status of the number of infections.

Detection methods

As we have informed your Chamber earlier, we have drawn and put into operation, since the 1st notification of SARS-CoV-2 infections in mink farms, 3 measures in order to detect infections in mink companies. They are

1. the mandatory notification of disease suspicion by keepers, veterinarians, and laboratories;
2. the compulsory early warning (EW) survey (weekly submission of dead animals); and
3. the mandatory serological screening test on the farms (research on antibodies).

Current number of infected companies

In our earlier letters, we spoke about infected companies and infected locations. An owner may run a company (enterprise) with multiple locations. To avoid confusion about this, we decided to use only the term "infected company." Thereby we consider each location as a separate company.

The number of infected companies has risen to 13 since 23 Apr 2020 (as of 9 Jun 2020, 4 p.m.). Since our previous letter dated 3 Jun [2020], 4 new SARS-CoV-2-infected companies have been added: 3 of them came to light through the early warning survey, and one was discovered by notification. It concerns 2 companies in Landhorst, one in Volkel, and one in Castenray.

The source of the infections is unknown. The NVWA conducts a tracing investigation on the companies and is in contact with the GGD about the possible testing of co-workers. The available virus isolates are also examined. This way, it may be possible to gain more insight into the infection routes.

Sampling in all mink companies in the Netherlands, for the serological screening investigation, has been completed. The study's results are expected by the end of this week.

Based on the results, we will be able to decide whether and how this serological research be continued in the near future. The above findings show that all 3 disease-detection methods have been applied and were complied with.

Cullings of infected mink farms

On 3 Jun [2020], we informed your Chamber about moving to the culling of the infected companies and that the NVWA would start the operation on 5 Jun [2020]. Due to a temporary provision with the Board of Appeal for Business (CBb), the start of the culls was postponed on Jun 5 [2020]. This temporary provision was filed by the Animal Rights and Fur for Animals Foundation, requesting the judge to suspend the culling. The hearing took place last Friday, 5 Jun [2020], and the judge delivered his judgment on Friday evening [5 Jun 2020], rejecting the request not to cull mink farms. The motivation of the judge is expected in 2 weeks.

The NVWA started clearing the 1st company on Saturday morning, 6 Jun [2020]; 2-3 companies can be culled daily. The animals on the last infected companies will be appraised this week and will be killed and destroyed afterwards.

The NVWA supervises the progress of the culling operations and has intensive supervision contact with the holders of the companies. The NVWA indicates that the culling went well, and the animals are handled with care. The collaboration with the staff of the companies is good. The animal disease welfare committee, instituted by the Minister of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality, has been present during the culling and will draw up a report on this.

The national measures, such as the hygiene protocol, the transport ban for minks, and the visitors' ban, still apply. The compulsory early warning (EW) survey (weekly submission of dead animals) and the mandatory notification requirement also remain in force.

We will review this week's results of the serological screening and consider the continued policy. We will keep your House informed of the results of the screening research and will regularly inform your House about the course and numbers of infections.

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<promed@promedmail.org>

[During a debate of the Dutch House of Representatives, which took place on Wed 10 Jun 2020, a majority of the House expressed the wish that the cleared mink farms will not be repopulated. Different modes of compensation and timetable of the entire industry were discussed.

The Dutch mink COVID-19 event includes an additional issue of significance, namely the involvement of cats in its epidemiology. This, and the fate of the barn cats remaining on the premises of the depopulated farms, are to be addressed separately. - Mod.AS

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North Brabant, Netherlands: <https://promedmail.org/promed-post?place=7453845,1250>

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See Also

- COVID-19 update (236): Netherlands (NB, LI) animal, farmed mink, spread, culling 20200604.7427849
- COVID-19 update (230): Netherlands (NB, LI) animal, farmed mink, spread, control 20200602.7420433
- COVID-19 update (215): Netherlands (NB) animal, mink-to-human, epidem., control 20200527.7385049
- COVID-19 update (209): Netherlands (NB) farmed mink, animal-to-human, cat, epid 20200525.7375359
- COVID-19 update (198): Netherlands (NB) farmed mink, animal-to-human infect susp 20200520.7359976
- COVID-19 update (189): Netherlands (NB) animal, farmed mink, research, cat, dog 20200517.7344274
- COVID-19 update (177): Netherlands (NB) animal, farmed mink, Spain (CT) cat susp 20200512.732858
- COVID-19 update (174): Netherlands (NB) animal, farmed mink, comment 20200511.7323845
- COVID-19 update (169): Netherlands (NB) animal, farmed mink, spread, rabbit susp 20200509.7316646
- COVID-19 update (154): Netherlands (NB) animal, farmed mink, research 20200503.7294846
- COVID-19 update (146): Netherlands (NB) animal, farmed mink, epidemiology 20200501.7286113
- COVID-19 update (135): Netherlands (NB) animal, farmed mink 20200427.7272289

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