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Subject: PRO/AH/EDR> COVID-19 update (477): animal, Sweden, mink, spread, genotyping

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CORONAVIRUS DISEASE 2019 UPDATE (477): ANIMAL, SWEDEN, MINK, SPREAD, GENOTYPING

A ProMED-mail post

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Date: Fri 6 Nov 2020

From: Karl Stahl <karl.stahl@sva.se> [edited]

Subject: Update on the situation regarding SARS-CoV-2 in Swedish mink [COVID-19 update (475): animal, Denmark, mink, spike protein sequences 20201106.7922587]

Please find below an update on the situation in Sweden as regards SARS-CoV-2 in mink, as reported today [6 Nov 2020] to the OIE and the European commission.

Unfortunately, Sweden has confirmed 9 further cases of infection with SARS-CoV-2 in mink at farms in the southeast part of the country, in the County of Blekinge, i.e., in the same area as the 1st case that was detected. In this area, approximately 20 of Sweden's 40 mink farms are situated.

Dead minks from 18 farms in the area were collected and sampled with swabs from the oral cavity and pharynx and analysed with real-time PCR, as part of the ongoing surveillance based on animals found dead at the mink farms.

Movement restrictions and strict biosecurity measures have been imposed for all mink farms in Sweden, and not only for those infected.

We do not intend to cull the animals at this point. The Swedish mink population is small, approximately 600 000 animals, of which around 80% are already planned to be killed for fur production within the nearest weeks. Based on this, a decision of culling will have limited effect and not speed up the process of reducing the number of susceptible animals. Environment specialists will work out special procedures for collecting the pelts in a safe way.

The source of infection at these new farms has not been determined yet, but the authorities are investigating eventual human cases of COVID-19 being in close contact with the mink. Notably, the owner of the 1st farm and his father were tested positive for COVID-19.

The genome sequence analysis of the SARS-CoV-2 viruses detected from mink and humans in close contact with the infected animals at the index farm clustered together and belonged to the lineage B1.1.39. None of the amino acid mutations described on the spike protein of the recent Danish mink SARS-CoV-2 viruses is, so far, present in the spike gene of the Swedish mink SARS-CoV-2 viruses. In collaboration with the public health agency, sequencing of viruses from the latest confirmed positive cases in minks and human cases from the same municipalities as the location of the infected mink farms is ongoing.

This information is transmitted to the OIE in the context of Article 1.1.6 in the Terrestrial Animal Health Code in order to provide the relevant information arising from field observations to enable the OIE to have more clarity on which animal species are susceptible to infection and may potentially be involved in the epidemiology of the human disease.

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[ProMED is indebted to Dr. Stahl for the communication of the above update.

It is relieving to note that the Swedish SARS-CoV-2 mink strain has already been genotyped and found not to present the amino acid changes in the spike protein that were found in the "cluster 5" variant, identified recently in Denmark. The Danish strain was considered to be associated with a decreased susceptibility to post-infection antibodies induced by SARS-CoV-2 in humans, leading to Denmark's decision to cull its entire mink population.

Follow-up surveillance in Sweden's minks is warranted and deserves to include the testing of people who are or have been in contact with the infected farms. In case such people have translocated (e.g., foreign labor), these persons deserve preferably to be traced back and included in the testing regime.

The 1st Swedish event was located, according to media report, in Solvesborg, Blekinge (map at <https://tinyurl.com/y2ww6te5>).

Sweden has become the 6th country where COVID-19 infections have been reported to affect farmed minks, following the Netherlands, Spain, Denmark, USA and Italy. There are many other countries where minks are farmed, led by the world's largest, China. Surveillance and reporting in all are warranted. - Mod.AS

HealthMap/ProMED-mail map:

Sweden: <https://promedmail.org/promed-post?place=7924269,108>]

See Also

COVID-19 update (475): animal, Denmark, mink, spike protein sequences 20201106.7922587

COVID-19 update (473): animal, Denmark, mink, mutation, eradication, RFI 20201105.7918210

COVID-19 update (471): animal, Denmark, mink, zoonotic, eradication 20201104.7916300

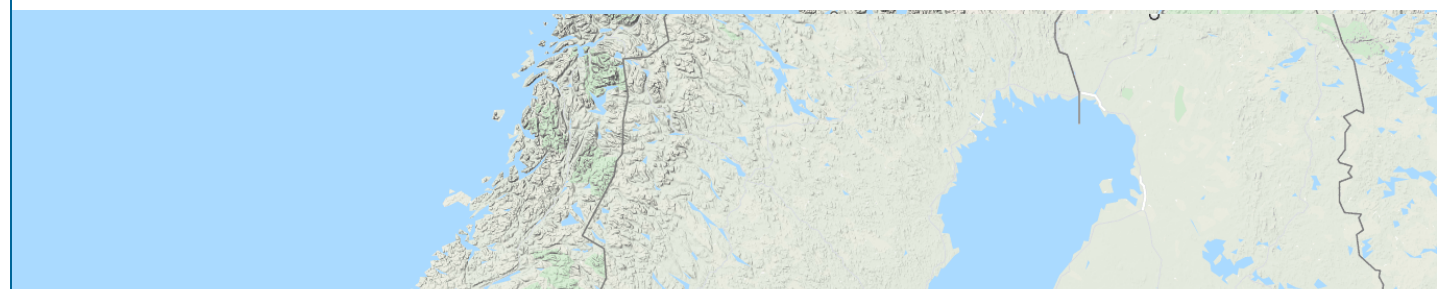
COVID-19 update (468): animal, Sweden, mink, 1st rep, OIE 20201103.7912846

COVID-19 update (464): animal, Denmark, mink, control, One Health 20201101.7906484

COVID-19 update (461): animal, Sweden, mink, 1st case, RFI 20201030.7903582
COVID-19 update (458): animal, Italy, mink, RFI 20201028.7897986
COVID-19 update (445): animal, Netherlands, Denmark, mink, spread, epidemiology 20201019.7873326
COVID-19 update (439): animal, Denmark, mink, spread, control 20201014.7861560
COVID-19 update (437): animal, Netherlands, Denmark, mink, spread, control 20201013.7858915
COVID-19 update (433): animal, Denmark (ND, MJ) farmed mink, spread, control 20201010.7851707
COVID-19 update (430): animal, USA (UT) mink 20201009.7847704
COVID-19 update (425): animal, Denmark (ND) farmed mink, spread, control 20201004.7835635
COVID-19 update (414): animal, Netherlands (LI), Denmark (ND), farm mink, spread 20200925.7813579
COVID-19 update (406): animal, Netherlands (LI), Denmark (ND), farm mink, spread 20200918.7794239
COVID-19 update (401): Netherlands (NB), Denmark, farmed mink, spread 20200914.7777661
COVID-19 update (394): Netherlands (NB) animal, farmed mink, spread 20200908.7759382
COVID-19 update (387): Netherlands, mink, animal & public health, research 20200902.7740793
COVID-19 update (382): Netherlands, animal, farmed mink, spread, control 20200830.7730463
COVID-19 update (376): animal, ferret, mink, comment 20200827.7721923
COVID-19 update (366): animal, USA (UT) mink 20200818.7692815
COVID-19 update (363): animal, Denmark (ND) Netherlands (NB,LI) mink, spread 20200817.7687830
COVID-19 update (340): animal, China, enviro monitoring, Netherlands (NB), mink 20200801.7635820
COVID-19 update (334): animal, Netherlands, mink, spread, UK, cat, 1st rep, OIE 20200727.7617582
COVID-19 update (324): Netherlands (NB) animal, farmed mink, spread 20200719.7591013
COVID-19 update (317): Netherlands (NB) animal, farmed mink, spread 20200716.7578453
COVID-19 update (307): Netherlands (NB), Denmark (ND) farmed mink, spread, control 20200708.7553067
COVID-19 update (301): Denmark (ND) Netherlands (NB) farmed mink, spread, control 20200703.7536980
COVID-19 update (284): Denmark (ND) animal, farmed mink, spread, dog 20200624.7506728
COVID-19 update (281): Netherlands (NB, LI) farmed mink, spread, animal, global 20200623.7502849
COVID-19 update (266): Denmark (ND) animal, farmed mink, 1st rep 20200617.7479510
COVID-19 update (251): Netherlands (NB, LI) animal, farmed mink, spread, culling 20200610.7453845
COVID-19 update (248): Netherlands (NB, LI) animal, mink, spread, culling, cat 20200609.7446478
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 20200512.7328587
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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