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CORONAVIRUS DISEASE UPDATE (317): NETHERLANDS (NORTH BRABANT) ANIMAL, FARMED MINK, SPREAD
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A ProMED-mail post
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Date: Wed 15 Jul 2020
Source: Press release, Dutch Government [in Dutch, trans., edited]
https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/actueel/nieuws/2020/07/15/nieuwe-besmetting-covid-19-bij-nertsenbedrijf

An additional mink farm has been found infected by SARS-CoV-2. The farm, in Ledeacker, includes 4500 mink dams. The infection was brought to light by a report of symptoms of mink disease on the farm (duty to report). The farm will be cleared as soon as possible.

In total, 24 mink companies in the Netherlands have now been declared infected. All animals were culled on the 23 farms where SARS-CoV-2 was previously diagnosed.

The cabinet will continue the monitoring investigation in the coming weeks to detect new infections quickly. In view of the recently found infections, the ministers Hugo de Jonge (health, welfare and sport) and Carola Schouten (agriculture, nature and food quality), on the advice of experts, and together with the fur farming sector, have tightened up the hygiene protocol. In addition, the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine was asked to conduct in-depth research into possible introduction routes. The OMT-Z [Outbreak Management Team for Zoonoses; see comment] has also been asked to provide advice on the recent developments.

The government has already taken measures for all fur farms in the Netherlands, such as a national transport ban for mink, a visitor ban in stables and a strict hygiene protocol, to prevent further spread and to prevent CoV-2 from passing from mink to human, a phenomenon which has plausibly been recorded in 2 farms.

The government is working on a quit scheme with which mink companies can voluntarily terminate their business operations in the short term. In 2024, mink farms will stop their activities in accordance with the legal prohibition.

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communicated by:
ProMED-mail
<promed@promedmail.org>

[According to the Dutch presentation to the European Union's Standing Committee on Plants, Animals, Food and Feed [SCoPAFF] meeting (18 Jun 2020), there were, prior to the COVID-19 event, 127 active mink farms in the Netherlands, ranging in size from 500 to 120 000 mink per farm. The total adult mink population given was 2.32 million. This means that about 20% of the Dutch mink farms have already been found infected. This event may lend the country's scientific community a unique opportunity to study the epidemiology of this virus in susceptible animal population(s), in particular, modes of spread, including aerogenic. The presentation, which dealt with the 1st 15 COVID-19 outbreaks in minks, is available at https://ec.europa.eu/food/sites/food/files/animals/docs/reg-com_ahw_20200618_covid_mink_nld.pdf.

OMT-Z, mentioned in the above press release, stands for "Outbreak Management Team for Zoonoses". It is a team of experts formed in case of an outbreak for which guidelines on outbreak control do not exist, or do not cover the specific outbreak situation. Experts assess the signal in depth and advise the AGCM-Z (Administrative Governmental Coordination Meeting - Zoonoses) about the risk and appropriate control measures.

OMT-Z is one of the components of which the Dutch "structure for the control of zoonoses", which was set up in 2011 as a separate entity based on the older structure for the control of infectious diseases, is composed.

A major outbreak of Q fever among humans, mainly in North Brabant during 2007-2010, originated in dairy goat farms and involved more than 4000 human cases, marking a turning point in how the Dutch government responds to emerging zoonotic diseases. The need to signal, assess, and control emerging zoonoses, especially new ones, requires close cooperation between medical and veterinary professionals. Accordingly, a systematic One Health approach was developed and officially instituted for the purpose of sharing, assessing, and responding to signals of new and re-emerging zoonotic infections in which veterinary and medical professionals work together.

In 2011, this integrated human-veterinary risk analysis structure was formally adopted by the Dutch Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport and the Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality as the national Zoonoses Structure. The Zoonoses Structure consists of several steps (see reference). Crucially, both medical and veterinary experts are involved at every step. An important platform in this structure is the Signalling Forum for Zoonoses (SOZ), which conducts the initial assessment of signals. Its members are:
1. GD Animal Health, Deventer
2. Wageningen Bioveterinary Research, Lelystad
3. Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, Utrecht University, Utrecht
4. Netherlands Food and Consumer Product Safety Authority (NVWA), Utrecht (Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality)
5. Municipal Public Health Service (GGD)
6. Dutch Wildlife Health Centre (DWHC), Utrecht
7. National Institute of Public Health and the Environment (RIVM), Bilthoven (Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport)

The current event has become the baptism of fire for the said Dutch system.

Reference:
Signalling and risk assessment of emerging zoonoses: a One Health approach in the Netherlands. https://www.rivm.nl/sites/default/files/2019-04/011192_Folder%20signalling%20zoonoses_A5_V1_TG_0.pdf. Published by the National Institute for Public Health and the Environment, RIVM, Bilthoven, the Netherlands, February 2019. - Mod.AS

HealthMap/ProMED-mail map of North Brabant, Netherlands: https://promedmail.org/promed-post?place=7578453,1250.]

See Also

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 (267): animal, domestic, wild, cat, research 20200617.7480013
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 (238): USA (MN) animal, cat 20200605.7429133
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 (227): animal, cat, dog, research, experimental infection 20200601.7416648
COVID-19 update (215): Netherlands (NB) animal, mink-to-human, epidem., control 20200527.7385049
COVID-19 update (212): Russia (Moskva) animal, cat, OIE 20200526.7379578
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 (183): Japan/USA, animal, research, cat, experimental infection 20200514.7337185
COVID-19 update (181): Germany (BY), France (AC), cat, OIE animal case definition 20200513.7332909
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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