



April 1, 2021

Chair Jeff Golden
Senate Committee on Natural Resources and Wildfire Recovery
900 Court St NE
Salem, OR 97301

Re: SB 832, Mink Farm Biosecurity

Chair Golden and Members of the Committee,

Mink have long been known to be susceptible to a myriad of diseases carried by both humans and wildlife. Because of this, Fur Commission USA administers a robust biosecurity program that US farmers have been abiding by for over 30 years. The aim of the program is to reduce the farm's exposure to disease and to contain and control exposure should a disease outbreak occur. Protocols cover the physical facilities, deliveries, employees and visitors, and daily animal monitoring. Since the introduction of the SARS-CoV-2 virus, the program has been strengthened through the recommendations made by the USDA and the CDC One Health program regarding PPE, employee screening, and limiting access to the animals.

The objective is to have complete control of the farm environment. This means controlling the ability of wildlife and people from entering the farm, containing the original livestock to the farm and managing what the animals on the farm are exposed to. In order to conform with the Standard Guidelines for the Operation of Mink Farms in the U.S; Biosecurity Protocols, each farm must have:

- Perimeter fencing with max 1.5-inch mesh and wildlife barrier (electrical current or metal sheeting),
- Disease monitoring, screening, and vaccination program,
- Secure and limited access gates,
- Disinfectant footbaths and washing stations at access points,
- Farm-dedicated clothing and footwear,
- PPE protocols (masks, gloves, distancing, etc.), and
- Regular disinfecting of equipment, surfaces, feed areas.

Employees are not to come to work if they feel ill or are showing any symptoms of illness. Some farms are requiring regular COVID testing while others are screening with temporal thermometers. Employees are encouraged to practice proper protocols and distancing when off the farm. Deliveries (feed, equipment, supplies) are isolated in a separated area from the animals, where they are isolated and disinfected before introduction to the farm environment. Delivery personnel do not exit their vehicles. Any other visitors must follow PPE and distancing protocols when on the property but may not enter the mink sheds without proper clearance.

(CDC One Health) People Working on Mink Farms: Prevent the Spread of COVID-19 · (CDC One Health) Steps to Prevent COVID-19 on Mink Farms · (USDA) Response & Containment Guidelines; Farmed Mink and Farmed Mustelids with SARS-CoV-2

Mink Vaccine

Zoetis initiated development activities for a SARS-CoV-2 vaccine in early 2020 based on initial concerns about SARS-CoV-2 in domestic animals. The initial development work and studies were completed on dogs and cats, and those studies were published last year at the World One Health Congress. In mid-2020, the development work then shifted to mink as the incidence in that species escalated and demonstrated a critical industry need. Zoetis has tested the vaccine in mink, as well as the canine and feline models, and is progressing the mink vaccine toward licensure in various markets.

This Coronavirus vaccine is for use in mink, and it is currently under regulatory review with the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) for licensure. Since these timelines are lengthy, and there is need now to protect mink, the USDA has agreed that the experimental version of this vaccine can be made available to the mink industry for emergency use in time to vaccinate kits and breeding stock this year.

Due to the extraordinary impact of the SARS-CoV-2 virus on mink, as well as the desire by Zoetis, the Fur Commission USA, the USDA and the CDC to provide a solution, we anticipate having all processes and approvals in place to have product available for shipment to mink farmers and ranchers in the second half of May.

Respectfully,

Dr. John Easley DVM

Chief Executive Officer,
Mink Veterinary Consulting and Research Service