



**MINISTRY OF RURAL
DEVELOPMENT AND FOOD
DIRECTORATE GENERAL OF
VETERINARY SERVICES
DIRECTORATE OF
ANIMAL HEALTH**

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Athens: 16 / 11 / 2020

Ref. Num.: 2770/320629

TO: World Organization for

Animal Health

12, Rue de Prony

75017 Paris

France

Dear Dr. Monique Eloit,

I would like to inform you about the first detection of SARS-Cov-2 in mink on a small mink farm in the northern part of the country, in the regional unit of Kozani. This is the first detection of SARS-CoV-2 in animals in Greece.

The local veterinary authorities were notified on 11/11/2020 by the farm veterinarian about respiratory symptoms, reduced feed intake and increased mortality. Official veterinarians visited the farm on 12/11/2020 and collected oropharyngeal swabs from diseased and dead animals. Samples were analyzed with real-time PCR at the Centre for Research and Technology Hellas (CERTH) in Thessaloniki and tested positive on 13/11/2020. Further laboratory investigation (whole genome sequencing) is in progress.

As a precautionary measure and based on the increasing morbidity/mortality, it was decided to cull the 2500 adult mink of the farm. Culling was completed on 15/11/2020 and carcasses were buried on site. Cleaning and disinfection will take place in the following days. A control zone of 10 km, where almost 40 mink farms are located, has been established around the infected farm. Movement restrictions and strict biosecurity measures have been imposed in the control zone.

According to the epidemiological investigation, it is more likely that the introduction of the virus originated from the two family members (mother and son) working on the farm, who were both tested positive for COVID-19. Genome sequence analysis is in progress also for the virus isolates from human samples.

In addition to the aforementioned confirmed case, another outbreak is suspected on a farm with approximately 5000 adult mink. This second farm is located within the control zone in Kozani and animals exhibit similar symptoms as the first one. Samples were collected on 15/11/2020 and results are pending. Moreover, after receiving relevant information from health authorities, veterinary services are expected to sample eight more mink farms in the regional units of Kozani (3), Kastoria (4) and

Grevena (1), where workers tested positive. Animals from these farms have been showing no clinical signs till now. All nine farms have been placed under official surveillance and appropriate measures are applied.

Veterinary authorities have been monitoring the situation on mink farms since the first case announcement from the Netherlands in April. Until recently, there was no indication of virus circulation in the mink population. However, recent deterioration of the epidemiological picture in the human population in northern Greece has increased the likelihood of human-to-animal transmission, especially in small family farms where inadequate biosecurity measures are implemented.

In the framework of the one-health approach, veterinary and health authorities have been closely collaborating both at local and central level. At this point, it has been decided to sample and test all workers from the total 92 active mink farms of the country. This procedure will be repeated at least every seven days till pelting season is completed. Positive findings shall be notified to the veterinary authorities in order to proceed to clinical investigation and sampling of animals from the epidemiologically linked farms. The first cycle was concluded on 13/11/2020 and suspected linked farms are being investigated as already mentioned above.

I will keep you informed about further developments and measures taken by the authorities.

Yours sincerely,



Chrysoula Dile
OIE Delegate



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