



World Organisation for Animal Health
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Update 4 on the COVID-19 situation in Denmark

Dear Dr. Monique Eloit,

I hope this letter finds you well.

Following my letter to you on 24 August 2020, I hereby update you on the developments regarding SARS-CoV-2 in mink farms in Denmark. Since late August, the situation has evolved and unfortunately, new outbreaks of SARS-CoV-2 in mink have occurred.

As of 28 September 2020, SARS-CoV-2 has been confirmed in 27 mink farms in Denmark. This is an increase of 23 infected farms since our update on 24 August 2020. All farms are located in the Northern part of Jutland, in the municipalities of Hjørring and Frederikshavn.

Our update on 24 August 2020 also outlined the details of the new control and surveillance strategy that was launched by DVFA as of 20 July 2020. The current situation is dealt with in accordance with this strategy.

This includes that DVFA has completed three surveillance rounds of testing. The third round ended last week, and some of the analysis results are still pending.

In the first round of testing, 925¹ farms were sampled and all samples tested negative for SARS-CoV-2.

The second round of testing revealed five SARS-CoV-2 positive mink farms out of 1011 tested farms. The DVFA takes verification samples afterwards, and these confirmed two infected farms.

The third round of testing has shown 11 farms positive for SARS-CoV-2 out of 971 farms sampled and tested. So far, the verification samples taken by DVFA confirmed SARS-CoV-2 in eight farms. The results from the other three farms are still pending.

Table 1 summarises the results of three surveillance rounds.

¹ The number has been revised as some of the farms counted in the first round of testing actually was referred to the second round. The table below contains the final information.

Table 1. Surveillance programme in mink farms in Denmark

| Testing round, no | Testing period (week) | Farms tested, no | Positive farms in the surveillance, no | *Confirmed positive farms, no |
|-------------------|-----------------------|------------------|--|-------------------------------|
| 1 | 30-32 | 904 | 0 | - |
| 2 | 33-35 | 1011 | 5** | 2 |
| 3*** | 37-39 | 971 | 11 | 8**** |

*The verification samples taken by DVFA

**Four of the farms are owned by the same person. Only one of those farms tested positive in the verification test. Cross-contamination of samples suspected.

***The third round of testing is complete but the analysis results of some samples are still pending.

****The results of the verification samples taken by DVFA of three of the 11 farms that tested positive are still pending.

Besides the farms found positive in the three surveillance rounds, further investigations are also performed based on information from the Health Authorities on persons found positive with COVID-19 and with addresses on mink farms. These farms are tested and some are found to be infected before the surveillance samples show a positive result. A few further farms are reported by the veterinary practitioners as having symptoms and are being tested as clinical suspect farms. This counts for the remaining 17 infected farms.

The epidemiological investigation of the outbreaks is still ongoing in an attempt to clarify the routes of transmission.

In order to find possible epidemiological links between the outbreaks, samples have been taken specifically in relation to identified feed transport routes. Samples were taken from the lorry driver, feed and work clothes. No links are established and all samples in this respect were negative for SARS-CoV-2.

In the light of the current outbreak situation, DVFA is launching additional controls and enforcement initiatives regarding requirements relating to the use of personal protection equipment (PPE) and application of hygiene requirements at farm level.

In order to mitigate the current situation, additional activities have been initiated. This includes intensified frequency of sampling (twice a week) of all dead mink in a herd in the relevant municipalities.

In line with the new control and surveillance strategy and as stated in previous updates, only the animals in the first three infected farms was culled. The fourth farm was confirmed infected on 14 August 2020 and the farm has now entered the testing program to verify that the infection is no longer active.

I will keep you posted about any further developments concerning this issue. Please do not hesitate to contact me if any need for clarification.

Yours sincerely,



Dr. Hanne Larsen
Chief Veterinary Officer, DVFA

This information is transmitted in the context of Article 1.1.6 in the OIE 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 through.