

**Voluntary Report** – Voluntary - Public Distribution

**Date:** December 03,2020

**Report Number:** LH2020-0003

**Report Name:** COVID-19 Outbreak on Lithuanian Mink Farm

**Country:** Lithuania

**Post:** Warsaw

**Report Category:** Agriculture in the News, Livestock and Products, Sanitary/Phytosanitary/Food Safety

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**Report Highlights:**

On November 26, 2020, the Lithuanian State Food and Veterinary Service (SFVS) announced an outbreak of COVID-19 among mink on a farm in Central Lithuania's Jonava District. The farm's production capacity is 100,000 mink, but due to the current seasonal pelt harvest, only about 60,000 animals remain on the farm. The SFVS prohibited any removal of animals, feed, or other animal products from the infected farm. Mink kept in 22 infected cages were culled and their carcasses were rendered in a local rendering plant. SFVS authorities reported the outbreak of COVID-19 in mink to World Health Organization (WHO) and notified the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE). The SFVS does not currently plan to follow the Danish model of culling Lithuania's entire mink population following the COVID outbreak.

## **General Information**

On November 26, 2020, the SFVS confirmed that about 150 dead mink on a farm in the Jonava District of Central Lithuania were positive for COVID-19. The outbreak site is owned by companies UAB Danmink and AB Vilkijos ūkis. The farm's total production capacity is 100,000 mink, but due to the ongoing pelt harvest, the current population is only about 60,000 animals. According to SFVS Director Dr. Darius Remeika, the farm initially reported information about higher mink mortality rates to the SFVS on November 24, 2020. The National Institute for Food and Veterinary Risk Assessment used PCR testing to confirm the deaths were caused by COVID-19.

On November 25, 2020, SFVS was notified that one of the farm's employees tested positive for COVID-19. The results of the investigation indicate that SARS-CoV-2 virus was most likely the result of human to animal transmission. SFVS is urging all Lithuanian mink farms to adhere strictly to biosecurity requirements and limit direct human contact with mink. The SFVS also conducted virtual biosecurity training for mink, which was attended by 400 over participants.

SFVS prohibited removing any animals, feed, or other animal products from the infected farm. Mink from 22 infected cages were culled and rendered at a local rendering plant. SFVS is randomly testing animals on all Lithuanian mink farms for COVID-19. No additional positive cases have been found outside the initial outbreak site in the Jonava District. According to Dr. Vidmantas Paulauskas, SFVS Deputy Director, the Lithuanian Veterinary Authorities reported the mink COVID outbreak to the WHO and notified the OIE.

On November 12, 2020, the Director of the SFVS issued an order obliging Lithuanian mink producers to report to regional SFVS authorities about daily mortality rates on each farm. SFVS' Director of SFVS also issued an order banning live-mink imports from other EU Member States.

According to Dr. Vidmantas Paulauskas, Deputy Director of SFVS, Lithuania's mink population totals about 1.7 million animals. During the fur harvest season in December and January, the population of mink is reduced by about 1.3 million animals. In Lithuania, 53 percent of mink farms have at least 10,000 animals.

## **Attachments:**

No Attachments.