

Voluntary Report – Voluntary - Public Distribution

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Report Name: Dutch Mink Industry to Close in 2021 Due to Coronavirus

Country: Netherlands

Post: The Hague

Report Category: Agricultural Situation, Agriculture in the News, Livestock and Products

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Report Highlights:

The government has elected to put an end to Dutch mink farming three years ahead of schedule due to the recent coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreaks on the country's mink farms. More than one-third of all Dutch mink farms have been infected by COVID-19, to date. The 'fur period' starts in November and once all minks have been stripped of their fur, the breeders will not longer be permitted to place new animals in their cages (effectively shuttering the industry by the end of March 2021). In the meantime, additional control measures have been imposed on the industry, and a mandatory buyout scheme will be established to buyout the industry before it was scheduled to close in 2024.

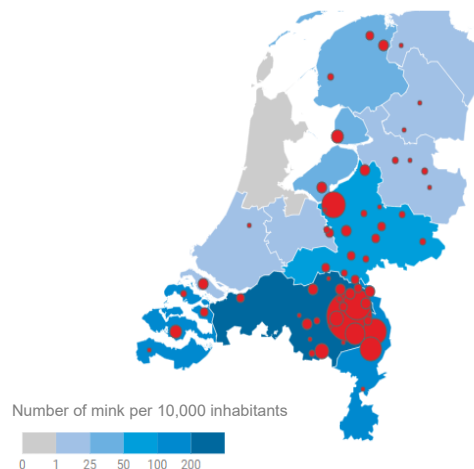
General

Although the Dutch mink industry was scheduled to cease operations on January 1, 2024 (pursuant to the [Fur Animal Husbandry Act](#)¹), Ministers Schouten (Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality) and de Jonge (Health, Welfare and Sport) have ordered all mink farms in the Netherlands to end their breeding programs by the end of March 2021 due to the rapid spread of the coronavirus (COVID-19) on these farms. The Ministers made this decision based on a recommendation from the Zoonotic Outbreak Management Team (known by its Dutch Acronym of OMT-Z).² In an official press release, the Government stated:

“despite the limited risk to public health at the moment, it is desirable to stop the spread of the virus via mink farming. It is undesirable that the virus continues to circulate on mink farms as there is a risk that, in the long term, this will lead to infections - via employees - of people outside the mink farm. The OMT-Z therefore recommends a mandatory buyout scheme for mink farms. The Cabinet is adopting this advice.”³

To date, more than one-third of Dutch mink farms have been infected by COVID-19. Most of the farms, including those that have been infected, are located in the southeastern part of the country -- in the provinces of Brabant and Limburg (see, e.g., Figure 1). All farms where mink were found to be infected by COVID-19 have been cleared by the Netherlands Food and Consumer Product Safety Authority (known by its Dutch acronym of NVWA). Since the beginning of the COVID-19 crisis (as of September 1, 2020), more than 1.5 million mink⁴ have been culled by the NVWA across 43 farms.

Figure 1. Mink Farms in the Netherlands



Source: [Brabants Dagblad](#), based on figures of Statistics Netherlands

¹ Since 2013, there has been [a ban on opening new mink farms or expanding existing operations](#) (in Dutch) in the Netherlands, and mink farming originally would have to be completely phased out by January 1, 2024.

² If there is a cross-regional outbreak of infectious disease in the Netherlands, or if there is an international threat of infectious disease, the Dutch National Institute for Public Health and the Environment can convene an Outbreak Management Team (OMT).

³ <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/actueel/nieuws/2020/08/28/kabinet-neeemt-omt-z-advies-verplichte-stoppersregeling-voortsenfokkerij-over>

⁴ <https://www.dutchnews.nl/news/2020/08/coronavirus-spreads-to-39th-fur-farm-no-moves-yet-on-total-cull/>

According to Government sources, the measures will cost roughly 180 million euros: 40 million for the culls and 140 million for a “mandatory buyout scheme.” In November, the “fur period” begins (i.e., when mink are stripped of their fur). Afterwards, the breeders will no longer be permitted to put new animals in their cages (effectively ending the industry by the Government’s new target).

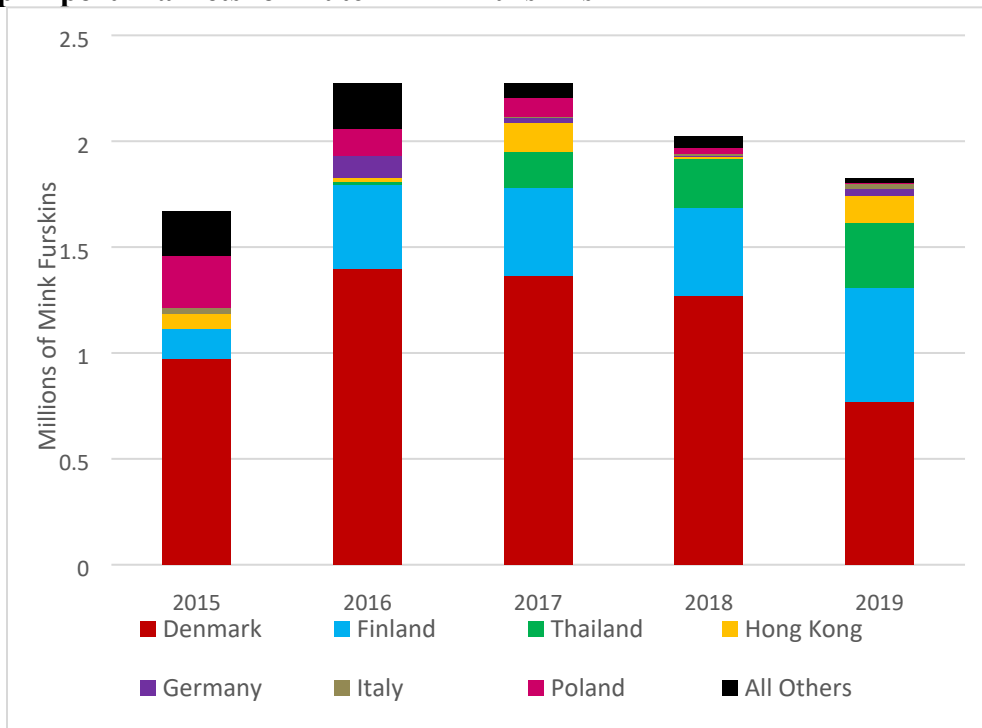
In addition to the buyout scheme, Minister Schouten has also strengthened the COVID-19 control measures on mink farms to help mitigate the further spread of the virus. According to the OMT-Z, humans are the most likely source of contamination on Dutch mink farms. The measures are therefore aimed at preventing this ‘contamination route through, for example, stricter registration of who works when and where. For employees who work at multiple locations, a waiting period of ten days will be imposed before they can start working on another farm. The Minister has also requested an investigation into the industry's compliance with the initial control measures imposed on the sector.

The plans for the termination of the mink industry in the Netherlands have been approved by the Cabinet and further details on the compensation scheme (including the exact amount of compensation that mink farmers will receive) are expected in the coming weeks.

Dutch Exports of Mink Furskins

In 2019, the Netherlands exported \$50 million of raw, whole mink furskins. Denmark (the world’s largest producer of mink furskins) was the Dutch industry’s leading export market, accounting for 42 percent of exports, followed by Finland (29 percent), Thailand (17 percent) and Hong Kong (7 percent).

Figure 2. Top Export Markets for Dutch Mink Furskins



Source: Trade Data Monitor, HS Code 4301.10

Related Reports:

- [NL2020-0016 - COVID-19 Found on Dutch Mink Farms](#)
- [NL2020-0019 - Additional Control Measures for Dutch Mink Industry In Response to COVID-19](#)
- [NL2020-0024 - COVID-19 Found on Additional Dutch Mink Farms](#)
- [NL2020-0025 - Government to Cull Mink on COVID-19 Infected Farms](#)
- [NL2020-0036 - Coronavirus Continues to Challenge Dutch Mink Farms](#)

Attachments:

No Attachments.