

Federal Government, States Must Shut Down American Mink Farms, Say Animal Welfare Groups

With Denmark to kill 17 million mink, Animal Wellness Action calls on govt. agencies to prevent outbreaks of COVID-19 already infecting 100,000 Americans a day.

WASHINGTON, DC, UNITED STATES, November 6, 2020 /EINPresswire.com/ -- With COVID-19 cases ricocheting throughout the global mink industry --including in Denmark where its military will deploy to kill all 17 million mink on over a thousand farms -- key animal protection groups today called U.S. Department of Agriculture to develop an emergency plan to shutter

U.S. mink farms as a key strategy to stop the spread and mutation of the coronavirus. An outbreak at a mink farm this week in Wisconsin -- the largest mink-farming state in the U.S. -- resulted in the death of 3,000 mink at a single factory farm, while scientists speculate that the coronavirus is dangerously mutating on mink farms in Denmark.

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Wayne Pacelle



Mink | Photo Credit: Shutterstock

Today, [Animal Wellness Action](#), the Animal Wellness Foundation, and the Center for a Humane Economy wrote to Brad Little, R-Idaho, and previously to the governors of Oregon, Utah, and Wisconsin because of the disease threats and animal welfare concerns rife at mink farms, and asked him to work with federal authorities to shut down mink farms there. Already a series of COVID-19 outbreaks at mink farms in has prompted mass culls in Utah and Wisconsin. The groups are urging USDA to

quickly adopt a plan modeled after government buy-outs of mink farms in the Netherlands and Spain, which also suffered mink-farm outbreaks.

“The sheer scale of the mink cull in Denmark is a flare to the United States to warn us to take preventive action now before more Draconian measures are required,” said Wayne Pacelle, president of Animal Wellness Action and the Center for a Humane Economy. “The COVID-19 crisis is at a high-water mark in the United States, and mink farms are potential super-spreaders of the deadly virus.”

While COVID-19 infections among humans in the U.S. surge, particularly in Midwest states where mink farms are clustered, there is new evidence that the virus is “likely” to have been transmitted from infected mink to humans. This means that workers in mink farms may be exposed to COVID-19 from infected animals. With the virus rapidly spreading among the mink industry, the call to put an end to mink fur farming is not only an issue of humane treatment of animals, but a human health concern, particularly for the workers.

Mink seem to be among the most susceptible mammals in North America and Europe to COVID infections passed on to them by humans. The virus has killed thousands of mink on farms throughout Michigan, Utah, and Wisconsin. The outbreak in Denmark shows that the virus is mutating in the mink, posing special threats and potentially presenting a new challenge for vaccine makers. The United States has fewer than 200 mink farms, generating a total of \$59 million in total revenues in 2019, producing 3 million pelts each year, mainly for export to China.

“The mink industry does not produce an essential food or clothing item, and animal welfare concerns are likely to accelerate its already rapid decline,” said Scott Beckstead, director of campaigns for the Center for a Humane Economy. “Given the COVID health emergency in our nation, it’s time for the USDA to act immediately to end the mink farming industry while providing an economic safety package for mink farmers.” Mr. Beckstead grew up on a mink farm in Idaho.

AWA is calling for an immediate ban on breeding more mink and transporting them between farms or exporting their fur internationally. In addition, AWA is calling for a government buy-out of the entire industry, as is being done on the Netherlands, as an emergency response to the COVID crisis. If the Congress takes up a COVID package, the proposal should be considered by that body as well.

[Click here to view the letter.](#)

Animal Wellness Action is a Washington, D.C.-based 501(c)(4) organization with a mission of helping animals by promoting legal standards forbidding cruelty. We champion causes that alleviate the suffering of companion animals, farm animals, and wildlife. We advocate for policies to stop dogfighting and cockfighting and other forms of malicious cruelty and to confront factory farming and other systemic forms of animal exploitation. To prevent cruelty, we promote enacting good public policies and we work to enforce those policies. To enact good laws, we

must elect good lawmakers, and that's why we remind voters which candidates care about our issues and which ones don't. We believe helping animals helps us all.

The Animal Wellness Foundation is a Los Angeles-based private charitable organization with a mission of helping animals by making veterinary care available to everyone with a pet, regardless of economic ability. We organize rescue efforts and medical services for dogs and cats in need and help homeless pets find a loving caregiver. We are advocates for getting veterinarians to the front lines of the animal welfare movement; promoting responsible pet ownership; and vaccinating animals against infectious diseases such as distemper. We also support policies that prevent animal cruelty and that alleviate suffering. We believe helping animals helps us all.

The Center for a Humane Economy ("the Center") is a non-profit organization that focuses on influencing the conduct of corporations to forge a humane economic order. The first organization of its kind in the animal protection movement, the Center encourages businesses to honor their social responsibilities in a culture where consumers, investors, and other key stakeholders abhor cruelty and the degradation of the environment and embrace innovation as a means of eliminating both.

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