

Press release of 3 June 2020 on the letter to parliament on additional measures for mink farms

Government adopts advice to cull mink on infected farms

All mink on farms where coronavirus infection has been confirmed will be culled, starting this Friday. Infection has also been confirmed at the farm in Venray, bringing the total to 7 infected farms at 9 locations. Agriculture minister Carola Schouten and health minister Hugo de Jonge base their decision on the advisory opinions of the Outbreak Management Team for Zoonoses (OMT-Z) and the Administrative Coordination Committee on Zoonoses (BAO-Z).

These advisory opinions point to the fact that the virus can circulate on mink farms for a long time, thus presenting a risk to human and animal health. The culling of animals on all infected farms should be completed in the course of next week. The government is also exploring the possibility of a one-off, voluntary cessation scheme for mink farmers who want to terminate their operations in the short term.

By culling mink on infected farms, the government aims to prevent mink farms from becoming a virus reservoir and a threat to public health. Mink kits are born in spring. Previously infected mothers will pass on antibodies to their kits. This protection decreases over time, so that the kits become more vulnerable to coronavirus infection as they grow older.

Measures on non-infected mink farms

The measures introduced for all mink farms in the Netherlands earlier this week remain in force. They include a transport ban and a ban on admitting visitors to mink sheds. On top of these measures, the existing hygiene protocol will be tightened up very shortly, and will also address the issue of coronavirus testing for farm workers. In light of fur farming being banned in the Netherlands as of 2024, the government is also looking into a one-off, voluntary cessation scheme for mink farmers who want to terminate their operations in the short term.