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CORONAVIRUS DISEASE 2019 UPDATE (215): NETHERLANDS (NORTH BRABANT)
 ANIMAL, MINK-TO-HUMAN, EPIDEMIOLOGY, CONTROL

 A ProMED-mail post

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<<https://tinyurl.com/y6vec5bh>>

The transmission of the mink coronavirus to 2 people rings alarm bells. Researchers consider the risk of spreading small. Still, there are major concerns.

The call to clean up the mink farms infected with the coronavirus is increasing. Veterinarians and an affected livestock farmer are also calling on the government to take more measures on the infected farms. You ought to have the required knowledge to make decisions about this, says agriculture minister Carola Schouten.

On the infected mink farms, the virus now seems to be extinguished. The number of illnesses is declining, and mortality is again at a normal level. In the yearly cycle of mink, the puppy's throwing time is from mid-April to mid-May. Central to the research is whether the virus flares up again in the pups. If that is the case, the farms may encounter the threat of a virus that circulates for a long time.

(10)(2e) of the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine (Utrecht University) calls this an undesirable situation for public health. Further measures are needed. Minister Schouten will make a decision on this on Friday [29 May 2020], when the 1st results of the investigation become known. Schouten says that public health is paramount, and that there are no taboos. Clearing the mink holdings seems to be a serious option. Isolating the farms and getting the livestock out can be an alternative.

The coronavirus also appears to get into the manure of the mink; samples were taken in which this was demonstrated. Research should show how long the virus survives in the manure. For the time being, the manure must not be removed from the farms. In March and April [2020], before the infection came to light, the companies' manure was still driven out on their own land. However, according to (10)(2e) (10)(2e) of the RIVM, this had no impact on public health. Scientists are less afraid of spreading the virus through the manure.

The virus that was identified in corona patients in the vicinity of the mink was not identical with the strain detected in the mink. "If you had found the same type of corona in the area, it would have been very different. That has not been found," says Van Dissel. Also, the amount of virus found in manure is many times less than, for example, in samples from the throat. Van Dissel also points out that a virus is different from, for example, a microorganism such as Q fever, which remains in the manure for a long time due to spore formation [see comment].

How the infection got into the 3rd company is still unclear. Stray

cats may have played their role. The virus has been found in several [unowned] cats that come to the farm. From this it is concluded that the virus of mink has also been transmitted to cats. The role of this species in virus distribution is being investigated. The role is probably not very significant, given the developments worldwide.

However, Stegeman advises corona patients to keep their cat inside. "Obviously, we have a lot of experience with animal disease control in production animals, but not in pets," said Stegeman.

An extensive research on corona in cats is being set up. In addition, rabbit farms are also screened on corona. None of the rabbit farms have, at present, symptoms of COVID-19. The risk of spread through rats and mice is small. These species have very different receptors than the receptors to which coronaviruses attach.

The Netherlands is the 1st country where the coronavirus has been detected in production animals [minks] and where the transmission of virus from animals to humans has been demonstrated. The question of whether the problem is restricted to the Netherlands cannot be answered by scientists. "There was limited testing capacity for humans, so no animals have been tested," Stegeman explains.

At the mink company in Deurne, the infection has been found to be more severe than at the other 2 affected companies. The cause is not clear. According to Stegeman, the moment of introduction of the virus and the phase of the minks' pregnancy could play a role. The virus at this company was not found to be more pathogenic than the virus at the other companies.

The way in which the virus entered the farm is also unclear. It's possible that stray cats have played a role here. The veterinarians are also concerned because no air measurements have been made around the company for the virus. Stegeman acknowledges this. According to him, the investigations at the other companies, which are many times larger and have many more infected animals, make it sufficiently clear that no further research into the air in the area is necessary.

After the 1st results of the study become known, expected Fri 29 May [2020], the "Outbreak Management Team Zoonosen" is due to prepare an opinion. The government will decide next week on any suggested additional measures.

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[Comparing the manure contamination by SARS-CoV-2 to manure contamination by Q fever is not incidental. North Brabant's population underwent a serious Q fever epidemic during the years 2006-2009, regarded the largest ever anywhere in the world. During the epidemic, which was related to manure from infected goat farms, thousands of people were infected, many of them hospitalized, including mortalities and long-term complications (see <http://promedmail.org/post/20100930.3546>).

Researchers of the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine in the Utrecht University have recently undertaken an investigation addressing the infection rate among cats owned by COVID-19 health workers in the province of Utrecht. Results are anticipated with interest.

An additional case in a cat has recently been reported from Spain (Ref 1). Russia's 1st case in a cat has been reported by Russia to the OIE (<http://promedmail.org/post/20200526.7379578>). - Mod.AS

HealthMap/ProMED-mail map:
North Brabant, Netherlands: <<http://healthmap.org/promed/p/1250>>

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[See Also:

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COVID-19 update (209): Netherlands (NB) farmed mink, animal-to-human, cat, epid <http://promedmail.org/post/20200525.7375359>
COVID-19 update (198): Netherlands (NB) farmed mink, animal-to-human infect susp <http://promedmail.org/post/20200520.7359976>
COVID-19 update (189): Netherlands (NB) animal, farmed mink, research, cat, dog <http://promedmail.org/post/20200517.7344274>
COVID-19 update (183): Japan/USA, animals, research, cat, experimental infection <http://promedmail.org/post/20200514.7337185>
COVID-19 update (181): Germany (BY), France (AC), cat, OIE animal case definition <http://promedmail.org/post/20200513.7332909>
COVID-19 update (177): Netherlands (NB) animal, farmed mink, Spain (CT) cat susp <http://promedmail.org/post/20200512.732858>
COVID-19 update (174): Netherlands (NB) animal, farmed mink, comment <http://promedmail.org/post/20200511.7323845>
COVID-19 update (169): Netherlands (NB) animal, farmed mink, spread, rabbit susp <http://promedmail.org/post/20200509.7316646>
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COVID-19 update (146): Netherlands (NB) animal, farmed mink, epidemiology <http://promedmail.org/post/20200501.7286113>
COVID-19 update (143): USA (NY) animal, zoo, tiger, lion, tests <http://promedmail.org/post/20200430.7284183>
COVID-19 update (141): India, animal, wild tiger, susp, clarification, RFI <http://promedmail.org/post/20200430.7281768>
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COVID-19 update (135): Netherlands (NB) animal, farmed mink <http://promedmail.org/post/20200427.7272289>
COVID-19 update (130): USA (NY) animal, zoo, tiger, lion, new cases <http://promedmail.org/post/20200425.7266556>
COVID-19 update (124): USA (NY) animal, cat, lion, OIE <http://promedmail.org/post/20200423.7259119>
COVID-19 update (123): USA (NY) animal, cat, conf <http://promedmail.org/post/20200422.7256272>
COVID-19 update (113): USA (NY) cat, animal, susp, RFI <http://promedmail.org/post/20200418.7240811>
COVID-19 update (88): Germany, animal, research, pig, chicken, bat, ferret <http://promedmail.org/post/20200407.7196506>
COVID-19 update (85): USA (NY) animal, tiger, OIE <http://promedmail.org/post/20200406.7191480>
COVID-19 update (84): USA animal, tiger <http://promedmail.org/post/20200406.7191352>
COVID-19 update (76): China (HU) animal, cat, owned, stray, seropositive <http://promedmail.org/post/20200403.7179946>
COVID-19 update (75): China (Hong Kong) animal, cat, OIE <http://promedmail.org/post/20200403.7179945>
COVID-19 update (70): China (Hong Kong) animal, cat, pets & stock <http://promedmail.org/post/20200402.7173286>
COVID-19 update (58): Belgium, animal, cat, clinical case, RFI <http://promedmail.org/post/20200327.7151215>
COVID-19 update (56): China (Hona Kona) animal, dog, final serology

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 COVID-19 update (50): China (Hong Kong) animal, dog, 2nd case PCR
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 positive <http://promedmail.org/post/20200319.7112693>
 COVID-19 update (37): China (Hong Kong) animal, dog, prelim. serology
 negative <http://promedmail.org/post/20200312.7081842>
 COVID-19 update (30): China (Hong Kong) animal, dog, susp, serology
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<http://promedmail.org/post/20200302.7040373>
 COVID-19 update (22): companion animals, dog susp, RFI
<http://promedmail.org/post/20200229.7036661>
 COVID-19 update (17): China, animal reservoir, wildlife trade &
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