



MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF DENMARK

FACT SHEET

Outbreak of SARS-CoV2 on Danish mink farms. Status and action taken.

Since June 2020, Denmark has experienced several outbreaks of SARS-CoV2 on mink farms and virus transmission between mink and humans. As of November 4th, 207 mink farms have been infected.

On November 4th, the Danish government announced that new, unique mutations in the SARS-CoV2 variants had been found in tests from 5 mink farms and 12 individuals living in the surrounding areas. These mutations are not found to pose a greater risk to humans than the known SARS-CoV2 virus. However, one of these mutations has showed a reduced response to anti-bodies, which can ultimately affect the efficacy of potential vaccines. Currently, further investigations on this matter are being conducted by the Danish health authorities.

The new findings give rise to further concern. The European Center for Disease Control, the World Health Organisation and the European Commission have been informed of the findings and will be kept updated in accordance with relevant, international health protocols.

The Danish government takes the spread of the virus on mink farms very seriously. The Danish government has previously taken a number of far-reaching and concrete steps to mitigate the risk posed by the infected mink farms, including the culling of all infected mink farms and, as a measure of precaution, non-infected mink farms in a 7,8km zone around these. These measures are now being expanded.

Thus, the Danish government has taken a number of **new, far-reaching steps** to contain the spread of the virus:

- **The culling of mink will be expanded to all Danish mink farms countrywide.** The culling will start immediately, and it will not be allowed to breed new mink in 2021. This will lead to a de facto closure of the Danish fur industry for at least some years. Denmark currently holds app. 40-50% of the global market share in mink fur.

The culling efforts will be intensified i.e. with extra personnel and new incentive schemes for the mink farmers, who contribute to the culling, to make sure the operation is conducted as swiftly as possible. The operation is lead by the Danish National Operational Staff with the support of the Danish Veterinary- and Food Authorities, the Danish Defense Forces and the Danish Emergency Management Agency.

- **New wide-ranging restrictions will be implemented for the populations in the seven affected municipalities** (app. 280.000 persons). This includes, but is not restricted to:
 - Movements between the municipalities will be strongly discouraged unless it is required for essential purposes/critical functions.

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- Public transportation to- and across the municipalities will be shut down with the exception of school busses etc.
 - The Covid-19 testing capacity in the affected regions will be reinforced and all inhabitants are encouraged to undergo testing.
 - The efforts to track and trace the spread of the virus, and isolate any cases of the mutated virus, will be intensified with the assistance of the national health authorities and national police.
 - All public and private work places are strongly encouraged to restrict the physical presence at the work place to essential functions only.
 - Restaurants, bars, cafés etc. will be closed with the exception of take-away.
 - All indoor and outdoor cultural institutions, including museums, theatres, cinemas, libraries etc. will be closed for public access.
 - All indoor venues used for various sports-, leisure and association activities, including gyms, gaming cafés, playgrounds and swimming pools will be closed for public access.
 - All grade 5-8 students will transfer to distance learning. For all other grades, a mandatory distance of 1 meter between the pupils will be reinforced.
 - All post-high school educational institutions will transfer to virtual distance learning.
 - All inhabitants are encouraged to minimize social contacts. The current public ban on gatherings of more than 10 persons will be expanded to areas currently exempted.
- Although the new findings are concerning, they also illustrate that the considerable resources invested by the Danish health authorities in PCR-testing, studies and mapping of mutations in the SARS-CoV-2 variants enables the relevant authorities to take appropriate action.
 - The Danish authorities will continue to provide full transparency and ensure that relevant international partners are kept updated in accordance with relevant, international health protocols.

For more information, visit: <https://coronasmitte.dk/en/mink-farms>

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