



June 18, 2020

File: 0280-30

Ref: 192277

Lesley Fox, Executive Director
The Fur-Bearers
Email: lesley@thefurbearers.com

Dear Lesley Fox:

Thank you for your email of May 14, 2020 expressing concern for mink farms in BC.

Fur Farming is a licensed agricultural activity in the province of B.C. The province is committed to supporting the industry in carrying out this activity in a manner that aligns with the *Animal Health Act* Fur Farm Regulation, the National Farm Animal Care Council Code of Practice and with the *BC Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act*.

In order to meet the requirements of the Fur Farm Regulation and the National Farm Animal Care Council Code of Practice:

- A licensed fur farmer must establish a health management plan.
- A licensed fur farmer must ensure that each fur bearing animal on the fur farm is kept clean and free of parasites and observed daily to determine the animal's general health and condition, and to monitor any significant changes in the animal's general health and condition.
- Mink must be housed in a bio-secure area (i.e. wildlife should not be able to contact farmed mink and farmed mink should not be able to leave the bio-secure area).
- All sheds and buildings must have consistent and adequate airflow to ensure mink health and comfort; if natural ventilation is not sufficient, a mechanical system is required.
- Bedding must be obtained and stored to minimize the risk of contamination with pathogens.
- Sanitation protocols for premises, buildings, equipment, staff hygiene and vehicles must be implemented.
- Best management practices relating to the health and welfare of mink must be in place.
- Appropriate authorities must be advised of any suspected or confirmed cases of a reportable disease.

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Ministry staff have been in contact with the province's licensed fur farms within the last two months to ensure that all necessary precautions are being taken to reduce the risk of spreading COVID-19 through human to animal or animal to human transmission. The licensed fur farmers are also being proactive in their response to this situation and have enacted increased sanitation and enhanced biosecurity measures. Ministry staff will continue to share information with, and ensure that best practice guidelines are met by, our licensed fur farms. Additionally, ministry staff will perform inspections at each of the province's licensed fur farms after this year's kits are weaned, complying with all standard biosecurity measures as well as enhanced COVID-19 practices.

Thank you for writing and sharing your concerns with us during these unprecedented times.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Lana Popham". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Lana Popham
Minister

cc: Honourable Adrian Dix
Minister of Health