

Close the mink farms in Sweden permanently

The pandemic is far from over. Healthcare is under great pressure and many employers, employees and citizens continue to make great sacrifices to stop the spread of the virus.

At the same time, covid-19 has spread to the majority of Sweden's mink farms. During the pandemic, it has become clear that mink farms in particular have a high risk of being affected by the virus, which spreads quickly among mink, mutates easily and then infects humans. In Denmark, the government decided to cull all minks as a result of the virus spreading uncontrollably on mink farms with a risk to human health. Mutated variants of covid-19 may impair the functionality of the vaccines developed.

Mink farms have been questioned for a long time in light of intensive animal farming and whether or not they comply with the Swedish Animal Welfare Act. In September, more than 120 Swedish veterinarians and scientists called on Swedish politicians to phase out mink farms, both to protect animal welfare and reduce the risk of increased spreading of infection.

Apart from the breeding ban in 2021, Sweden has not taken any measures that prevent further spread of infection among minks and between mink farms. The mink farms are subject to restrictions, but since no one knows how the infection has spread between the farms, it is now clear that this has had no effect. Minks on infected farms were allowed to die by themselves and those who survived may now be kept as breeding animals. According to Danish reports, minks do not necessarily become immune to covid-19 after an infection, and can get sick several times.

Within the EU, almost 20 countries have chosen to phase out and ban the fur industry due to its ethical shortcomings. The shrinking crowd of countries that have not yet done so now risks creating reservoirs of covid-19 with the risk of continued spread of infection and mutation as a result. The Netherlands and Ireland are now culling all minks left in their fur industry as a precaution against covid-19. Another country that has already decided to phase out mink farms is France. They recently discovered their first case of covid-19 among minks and are now culling all minks on the farm concerned to prevent further spreading of infection.

Sweden stands out in an international perspective when we do not take any effective measures despite established infection on the mink farms.

Society is urged to persevere and adapt. It is very important that we all take the situation seriously in order to protect the vulnerable groups who are particularly affected by the virus. Based on the serious situation that Sweden is in right now, we believe that the precautionary principle should apply. Closing the mink farms during the ongoing pandemic in the way that Denmark has done is reasonable, taking into account the extensive risks associated with continuing to conduct mink breeding. A breeding ban this year is not enough. Sweden's decision-makers must ensure public health, secure the credibility in Sweden's animal welfare and reduce the risks of new outbreaks of infection.

Considering that mink breeding will be stopped in 2021 due to the extensive risks of further infection spreading that are closely linked to the unethical farming of minks in the fur industry, mink breeding should be closed permanently.

The undersigned calls on the Swedish government and parliament to produce a decommissioning plan for mink farms in Sweden as soon as possible. There are no arguments to wait.



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1. **Djurens Rätt (initiator)**
2. ACTAsia, Asia
3. Albert Schweizer Foundation, Germany
4. Anima
5. Anima International
6. Animal Defenders International
7. Animal Equality, International
8. Animalia, Finland
9. Animals Aotearoa, New Zealand's
10. Animals Australia
11. Animanaturalis, International
12. Bont Voor Dieren, Netherlands
13. CAAI, Bulgaria
14. Compassion in World Farming, International
15. Deutsche Juristische Gesellschaft für Tierschutzrecht (DJGT), Germany
16. Deutscher Tierschutzbund, Germany
17. Diervriendelijk, Nederland
18. Djurens Vänner, Sweden
19. Djurskyddet Sverige, Sweden
20. Dyrenes Beskyttelse, Danmark
21. Dzīvnieku brīvība, Latvia
22. Equalia, Spain
23. Eurogroup for Animals, EU
24. Falkenbergs Djurskyddsförening, Sweden
25. Four Paws International
26. GAIA, Belgium
27. Greenpeace, Sweden
28. Humane Society International
29. Humanny pokrok, Slovakia
30. L214, France
31. LAV, Italy
32. Mercy for Animals, International
33. Oikeutta eläimille, Finland
34. Otwarte Klatki, Poland
35. Rädda Djuren, Sweden
36. Rädda Djuren-klubben, Sweden
37. RSPCA, UK
38. SAFE for Animals, New Zealand
39. SEY Suomen eläinsuojelu, Finland
40. Sinergia Animal, international
41. The Humane League, UK
42. Tušti narvai, Lithuania
43. VeGaia, Greece
44. Voices for Animals, Russia
45. World Animal Protection, Sweden

