

For the complete wording of these regulations please contact the Chief Veterinary Officer (Director, Animal Health) or consult the provincial government website at [www.gov.nl.ca/hoa/sr](http://www.gov.nl.ca/hoa/sr) and look for the *Livestock Health Regulations* under the *Livestock Health Act*.

#### More Information

For more information on Aleutian Disease, biosecurity or animal husbandry please contact your Regional Veterinarian or Fur Specialist.

#### Links

##### Livestock Health Act:

[www.assembly.nl.ca/legislation/sr/statutes/122.htm](http://www.assembly.nl.ca/legislation/sr/statutes/122.htm)

For more information, please contact your Regional Veterinarian, your Fur Specialist, or the Animal Health Division.

Other information pamphlets are available online from the Department of Natural Resources at:

[www.nr.gov.nl.ca/agric/](http://www.nr.gov.nl.ca/agric/)

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# Import Regulations for Mink: Aleutian Disease



## Introduction

Aleutian Disease is an infectious disease that can cause serious illness in mink and economic hardship for farmers that have infected animals. It is known to exist in most mink-raising parts of the world and has been diagnosed in both wild and farmed mink in the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador. This pamphlet describes the disease and how it can be prevented, including the regulatory controls placed on the entry of these animals into this province.

## Aleutian Disease

Aleutian Disease (AD) is caused by a virus that spreads through the urine, blood, saliva and feces of infected animals. Healthy mink can become infected:

- 1) by direct contact with ones that are sick,
- 2) from an infected mother mink (dam) to her young (kits), before or after birth,
- 3) through feed, water, equipment or clothing that has become contaminated,
- 4) by wildlife that enter the farm.
- 5) by fleas that carry the virus from one mink to another.

Once outside of the infected animal, the AD virus is very resistant to the environment and disinfectants. Though eradicating the disease from a farm is possible, a mink ranch, once infected, might never be able to rid itself of the disease.

A mink that becomes infected with AD can become sick to the point of dying or end up being a carrier and spreader of the virus for the rest of its life.

It may take months or up to a year before an infected animal shows any signs of the disease. Sick mink often gradually lose weight, stop eating, become very thirsty, have a rough pelt and lose blood from their mouths, in their urine and even have bloody diarrhea. Outbreaks may occur after a period of stress.

Economic losses come from the actual illness and death of farm animals, from decreased pelt value and from reproductive failure (infertility, abortions, and early kit death). In addition, a farm known to have AD will have a harder time selling breeding stock than one without the disease.

## Prevention of Aleutian Disease

The best approach to dealing with AD is to not let it get onto the farm. This means only buying animals that are tested negative for the disease, quarantining any newly purchased animals, routinely testing farm animals, controlling biosecurity by not allowing the entry of any wild animals as well as practicing strict hygienic measures on the farm.

Testing for Aleutian disease in this province has found it to exist broadly within the wild mink population and within a number of infected farms.

## Regulated Entry of Mink into Newfoundland and Labrador

To support the growth of the mink industry, the provincial government has passed regulations under its *Livestock Health Act* which control the entry of mink into this province. The regulations state:

1. A person shall not bring mink into the province unless they have first obtained a permit from the Director of Animal Health (*section 15*).
2. Any mink coming into the province must be accompanied by a certificate signed by a licensed, official or accredited veterinarian from the place of origin of the mink certifying that (*section 20.1.1*):
  1. The farm from which the mink originated, routinely tests each year at least 10% of its breeding mink for AD and that there have been no cases of AD in the 12 months prior to importation;
  2. The mink were sampled for AD with negative results within 7-45 days prior to entry (unless otherwise authorized by the Director of Animal Health).

3. A person importing mink shall ensure that the mink chosen for import are kept separate from other mink once they have been tested for AD and are not exposed to other mink or animals that could spread AD during shipment (*section 20.1.2*).

4. Upon entry into the province, all mink shall be quarantined for at least 30 days at a site approved by a Regional Veterinarian, and only released by the Regional Veterinarian after further testing indicates that they are still free from AD (*section 20.1.3*).

5. Mink shall not be killed or pelted or moved away from the quarantine site without the permission of the Regional Veterinarian (*section 20.1.4*).

6. All cases of illness or death of imported mink on the importing farm that occur within 12 months of importation shall be reported to the Regional Veterinarian (*section 20.1.5*).

7. Where mink are brought into the province in contravention of these regulations, the Director of Animal Health may order that the animals be seized and returned to their place of origin at the cost or expense of the person owning, having possession, custody or control of the animals (*section 20.1.6*).

8. If infected animals are found in the province, they can be destroyed with or without compensation (*section 9.2 and 9.3*).