



**SCIENTIFIC OPINION FOR THE RISK ASSESSMENT BY ANALYSIS OF  
INFORMATION RELATED TO THE FARMING OF AN AMERICAN MINK FOR  
FUR IN THE TERRITORY OF BULGARIA**

**CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. American mink (*Neovison vison*) is not included the list of Regulation (EU) No 1143/2014 as an invasive species for EU, but has been included as invasive in several other lists in Europe. However, it must be taken in consideration that the American mink is an extremely powerful and aggressive predator that rapidly breeds and displaces the populations of highly threatened European mink, as well as other mustelid animals as it takes away territories, competes with them for food and shelter.

2. Bulgaria has ratified the European Convention for the Protection of Animals kept for Farming Purposes (ETS No. 87) and is required to transpose into its national legislation the principles and norms set forth therein.

3. The scientific literature is abundant in messages that show the wide range of infectious, evasive and zoonotic diseases of the American mink species.

4. Bulgarian Ordinance No 2 of 11 February 2009 on the conditions for the production of furry and feathered game on farms in line with its physiological and behavioral characteristics should be brought into line with Regulation (EU) No 1143/2014 and to:

- Introduce the requirements of the European Convention for the Protection of Animals kept for Farming Purposes (ETS) No 87 and the Recommendations on Fur Animals (22 June 1999) therein;
- Details the building requirements, animal husbandry conditions, biosecurity and escape prevention measures, establishment and validation of a prophylactic, disease surveillance program, etc.

5. The main measures to reduce the risk of spreading of contagious animal diseases related to the cultivation of American mink (*Neovison vison*) in livestock farms on the territory of the Republic of Bulgaria shall be related to:

- Existence of strict biosecurity measures at the mink farms in Bulgaria. Biosecurity measures must be specifically described in the national legislation - Ordinance No 2 of 11 February 2009 on the conditions for the production of furry and feathered game on farms in line with its physiological and behavioral characteristics and aiming at:
  - Reduce the risk of spreading diseases from the farm to the environment through uncontrolled release of animals and invasion of the environment or contaminated waste products (fertilizer, waste water, inventory, etc.) leaving the farm without proper disposal;
  - Reduce the risk of penetration of contagious diseases on the farm, through contaminated food and inventory or with human factor (animal care, veterinarian), etc.;

6. It is necessary to develop a program for surveillance of contagious diseases in mink, covering the main diseases posing a risk to public or animal health, aiming at:

- Detection of MRS strains, if any;
- Early detection of new on-farm diseases that pose a risk to animals and humans;
- Strengthening the official controls by the competent veterinary authorities.

7. The collection, treatment and transport of animal by-products (ABP) must be carried out in accordance with the requirements of Regulation (EC) No 1774/2002 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 3 October 2002 laying down health rules concerning side-animal products not intended for human consumption;

- Collection, treatment, disposal and transportation of organic waste and excrement materials;
- Assessment of the influence of controlled farming of American mink on the territory of the Republic of Bulgaria on the environment and socio-economic aspect.

8. Last but not least, all issues related to the welfare of minks should be taken into account and detailed in the legislation in force.

This will complete the main incompleteness of the legislation, ensure the successful operation of livestock farms for fur animals, providing the necessary conditions for their rearing in accordance with their physiological and behavioral characteristics in good welfare and provide sufficient guarantees to society through eliminating the main threats and the resulting conflict of interest between business and ecology.

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**26.09.2017**