

Veterinary Ireland Media Release 21st December 2018



Veterinary Ireland recommends an immediate ban on the farming of mink, and other wild animals, for the production of fur.

Scientific evidence has been growing for many years indicating that the behavioural needs of mink and other wild animals, that are being farmed for their fur, are not being provided for by current methods of farming. This failure to allow these animals to express normal behaviour is in direct contravention of the [European Council Directive 98/58/EC](#), which states that:

'No animal shall be kept for farming purposes unless it can be reasonably expected, on the basis of its genotype or phenotype, that it can be kept without detrimental effect on its health or welfare'.

“WelFur” is the European animal welfare scheme which has been developed in recent years to improve standards of welfare on European fur farms. It is supported by Fur Europe, the organisation representing fur farmers in Europe.

Having reviewed the available evidence, Veterinary Ireland concludes that the WelFur programme cannot prevent the welfare problems regularly encountered on fur farms, such as stereotypies and serious injuries. It has additionally concluded, given the nature of the animals concerned and the environment in which they are held, that there are simply no welfare standards or inspection regime that would prevent such problems arising on a regular basis. It is further clear that fur farms cannot provide for the five freedoms (or welfare needs) of mink, particularly in relation to the need to be able to express most normal behaviours.

Using the five domains concept, as detailed in [Veterinary Ireland's Policy Document on Captive Wild Animals 2018](#), it would seem that fur farms fail on all except the provision of appropriate nutrition. Farmed mink do not live in an environment that provides choice, appropriate shelter or a species appropriate comfortable resting area. The conditions experienced by farmed mink do not promote an environment that enhances fitness, but rather serves to protect the value of the animals' fur. Further, given the barren battery cages that farmed mink are confined to, there is little opportunity to provide any meaningful environmental enrichment. The behavioural restrictions inflicted on farmed mink can only lead to negative experiences (e.g. pain, fear, frustration) and therefore fail to maximise positive experiences.

For these reasons, and as explained in its [Veterinary Ireland Policy Document on Fur Farming 2018](#), Veterinary Ireland recommends an immediate ban on the farming of mink, and other wild animals, for the production of fur.

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EDITORIAL FOOTNOTES:

Veterinary Ireland Policy Document on Captive Wild Animals 2018:

http://www.veterinaryireland.ie/images/Veterinary_Ireland_Policy_on_Captive_Wild_Animals_22.11.2018.pdf

Veterinary Ireland Policy Document on Fur Farming 2018:

http://www.veterinaryireland.ie/images/Veterinary_Ireland_Policy_on_Fur_Farming_22.11.2018.pdf