



January 21, 2021

File: 0280-30

Ref: 193470

**B.C. Fur Farming Industry Discussion with
B.C. Minister of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries**

Thank-you for your interest in participating in the B.C. Fur Farming Industry discussion with the Honourable Lana Popham, Minister of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries.

The meeting purpose is to seek your input into the challenges facing the fur farming industry and hear your thoughts on the questions posed below.

Background

The Province relies on four pieces of legislation to govern the care, health, and welfare of fur animals. The *Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act* is the Province's primary animal protection legislation to address animal welfare and cruelty issues. The Animal Care Codes of Practice Regulation establishes reasonable and generally accepted practices of farmed animal management according to the National Farm Animal Care Council's (NFACC) Codes of Practice for the Care and Handling of Farmed Fox and Farmed Mink, respectively. The *Animal Health Act* primarily focuses on preventing, detecting and managing animal diseases. It also provides for licensing of fur farms, which is regulated under the Fur Farm Regulation. The Regulation outlines licensing processes and requirements for the health and care of fur animals.

The B.C. fur farming industry faces various challenges, especially considering COVID-19. In December 2020, mink on two fur farms in the Fraser Valley tested positive for SARS-CoV-2, which causes COVID-19 in humans. Both farms have experienced deaths of mink, and one farm also had several workers tested positive for COVID-19. B.C.'s Chief Veterinarian has placed both farms under Quarantine Orders, prohibiting the movement of animals and materials from the property to minimize the risk of the spreading of the virus.

.../2

Process

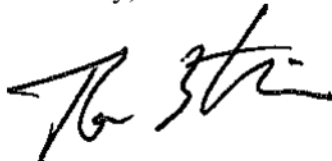
These meetings are intended to discuss the various perspectives on the topic of fur farming in B.C. An opportunity will also be provided for participants to provide additional responses in writing within 10 days of each meeting, if participants wish to do so; please send additional responses to Ursula.Viney@gov.bc.ca.

During the meeting, the Minister is seeking your input on the following questions:

1. Please share any comments regarding how COVID-19 has impacted your interests/activities? Challenges? Needs?
2. What do you view as being the main challenges facing the fur farming industry in B.C.?
3. What do you view as being potential solutions?
4. What do you view as being the implications of the potential solutions?
5. What are some opportunities for the future of the fur farming industry in B.C.?
6. Is there any other information that you would like to provide to the Minister with respect to the fur farming industry in B.C.?

Thank-you for your interest in participating in this process and sharing your insight into this sector.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tom Ethier', written in a cursive style.

Tom Ethier
Deputy Minister

Bullard, Dan CITZ:EX

From: Viney, Ursula E AFF:EX
Sent: January 27, 2021 3:11 PM
To: McGuire, Jennifer AFF:EX; Anderson, Arlene AFF:EX
Subject: FW: Report attachments.
Attachments: BCMPA Final Report. Jan. 7, 2021.docx; Honourable Lana Popham Meeting Questions.docx

Hi,^{s.79} was kind enough to send his written report from today and the one he presented on the Operations Meeting a few weeks back. Some excellent first hand information which will be useful for the policy paper and briefing notes.

Ursula

From:^{s.79}
Sent: January 27, 2021 2:50 PM
To: Viney, Ursula E AGRI:EX <Ursula.Viney@gov.bc.ca>
Subject: Report attachments.

[EXTERNAL] This email came from an external source. Only open attachments or links that you are expecting from a known sender.

Hi Ursula. Here is the report from January 7th/2021 meeting, along with the questions and answers from today's meeting with the Minister.

Perhaps the Minister would glance at the report as it has some clearer information on some questions she was asking.

Let me know if you have any problems opening the attachments.

Thank you.

s.79

Final Jan. 6th 2021

Report for Jan. 7/2021 meeting. RE: SARS-CoV-2 with the B.C Mink Industry and Government Officials.

My name is s.79

President BCMPPA and ranch manager for s.79

The SARS/Covid situation in mink has been a very concerning issue for Canadian mink breeders particularly as we watched the industry on a global level this past year. We became informed of Covid outbreaks on some farms throughout Europe and the shockingly hurried mis-calculation on executing a solution in Denmark - which resulted in a viable industry destroyed. We have also been following reported cases of outbreaks on farms in the U.S, of which, many are now close to being declared over and again safe to operate.

As per the majority of businesses throughout the country, BC mink producers faced an extremely stressful and demanding year to raise the 2020 crop during the strict Covid restrictions. Mink are known to be prone to respiratory illness. We are very aware and concerned that mink have been documented as an ideal host for the SARS/COVID virus and we recognize the seriousness of the challenge our industry is facing to find a way through this pandemic safely.

The restrictions and health orders that the BC mink industry is currently facing would be considered formidable for even the largest of our agricultural commodities. The mink industry does not have the benefit of market protection insurances or specialized funding. With limited resources available and the complexity of care needed to raise our crop we need to work closely with all agencies to better understand how to move forward and safely continue to operate.

Mink farming is a very specialized and unique business. Historically the fur industry has been a part of Canada's identity and produces to this day a superior product sought world wide. The wild furs produced by Canada support the indigenous community and the ranch raised fur are the livelihood of many generational family farms. In general, the industry is very labor intensive and a diligent overview and experience is required to succeed.

The ranch raised breeding stock is irreplaceable. The lineage and genetics are farm specific and often encompass 4 or 5 family farm generations. The pelts are graded like diamonds at the fur auctions and classified to the thousandth degree of quality.

Mink farmers have one crop cycle per year. There are no "off days" in mink farming as each crop cycle involves definite seasonal requirements. This is not a business with a monthly or weekly turn over for cash flow. The annual proceeds from sales of a crop will not be seen until months after harvest when the pelts are sold at international auctions throughout the next year.

To better understand our industry, I will give a very brief description of the importance of each segment of our crop cycle:

Breeder Legend -

- 1) Old Breeding Female – A two-four year old top producing female with superior fur quality when initially selected. Kept to pass on the farm's unique genetics.
- 2) Kit Breeding Female – A previous year's female selected to increase or to replace an old female. Kit females are selected from strong genetics for the highest fur quality. Kit females that do not meet the requirements are harvested in the fall/winter.
- 3) Kit Breeding Male – These are males carefully selected and live hand graded to source out improved quality and the best bloodlines for breeding season. Kit Males are harvested directly after breeding for their winter pelt which is still considered valuable.
- 4) Old Breeding Male – Some producers will keep the best male breeders after breeding season to breed them in following years.
- 5) Kit Crop – Animals not selected as breeding stock for the next crop year will be harvested in the fall.

Colours of mink Legend -

There are many colours of mink produced in Canada and throughout the world. It is important to know that each colour phase has specific requirements as far as feed, care and harvest schedules are concerned. BC ranchers typically raise Palomino, Pastel, Demi-Buff, Silver-Blue, Mahogany and Black breeds.

Labour Requirements Legend -

It is very important to understand that Mink Farming is a very hands on and labour intensive profession. At a minimum one full time animal husbandry position is created for every 800 Breeding females. To fulfill the proper care of our animals we cannot deviate even slightly from this number.

Harvesting Legend -

- 1) Harvesting – The processes of harvesting the crop as soon as the mink have grown their prime winter coats. Harvesting spans from the late fall months to the early spring. The harvest season is very labour intensive and time sensitive as it is crucial to harvest the animals when the fur is at prime. In the same season as the harvest the breeders for the next crop must be selected.
- 2) Skinning – The process of separating the hide from the carcass from freshly harvested mink or from mink frozen whole in body from a prior date. After skinning the pelts are processed either on site or frozen to be sent out to a pelting facility in conjunction with their marketing requirements and plans. The skinning and pelting process requires extra staffing (which is often seasonal) on account that the hide is perishable and destined for rot if not pelted or frozen in a timely manner
- 3) Pelting – This is a specialized process of removing the fat from the hide and then stretching and boarding the pelt to dry in heated rooms. After drying the pelt can now be called a "raw hide".

- 4) Raw Pelt – After pelting the “raw hide” will not rot and can be properly stored in cold storage until ready to ship to international Auction sites. Raw pelts will be graded by fur auction technicians and grouped together in lots for sale. This is how they are purchased at auction.
- 5) Dressed Pelt – At Auction the pelt will be purchased by a Fur Buyer who will need to have the ‘Raw Hide” tanned into a dressed pelt in order to manufacture the pelt.

Seasons Legend -

- 1) Jan.1st-Feb.28th - **Breeding mode.**

At this point in the production schedule, we are close to the least amount of mink that we have on our farms throughout the year. The previous crop has been harvested and over the next two months we will be finalizing selections for the males and females that will be used for the upcoming breeding cycle in March. The final health checks include blood testing females and males and last-minute hand grading of breeding stock. On top of the “breeder finalizing” this is also our time to clean and disinfect our ranches. Sheds are emptied and mink are moved into breeding position. We use as an industry average 1 male to breed 4 females during the breeding season. The condition of the animals must be monitored extremely well and diet needs to be carefully watched and adjusted. Experienced staff are the most valuable asset we have in order to keep the entire crop cycle successful.

- 2) Mar.1st-31st - **Breeding**

Breeding is time-consuming and extremely time sensitive. The heat cycle of mink is very complex and to have profitable results this requires experience and knowledge that comes from years of farming. It is normal that we try to achieve 4 breedings per female in order to have the best chance of conception. The problem is developing the cycles; therefore, we fill up all our males twice a day with the correct females and have to visually inspect to confirm a mating. We do this for 3-4 weeks straight as this is our one time to continue our operations and produce a crop. The mink go out of heat as fast as they came in and it's all over. They will not come into heat again until the following year.

- 3) Apr.1st-May.31st - **Preparation for Whelp**

The ranch herd at this time of year consists of only pregnant breeder females and a select few males. To safely prepare for the upcoming births nesting boxes and false bottoms need to be installed to cover our wire cage floors. Proper bedding materials is supplied for each female and, as always, diet and weight management protocols are carefully observed so whelping can go as smoothly as possible. Depending on genetics the peak of the births come in the last week of April and the first week of May. The babies (kits) are grams in weight when born and can perish within hours if conditions are not maintained. Each litter is checked upon birth and again 24hrs later to measure milk supply and general state of the animals. Problem litters have to be assessed and kits fostered off. The kits grow fast, doubling in size weekly. The feed requirements for mothers and kits need very close daily assessment as the herd will be at varying stages of development depending on each female's whelp date. It is important to remember that we are talking about thousands of whelping moms and many more thousands of kits born (one female can produce an average of 5-6 kits per litter). This season cannot be interrupted by labour shortage or animals will not be taken care of properly.

4) June.1st-July.31st-**Weaning/Vaccination**

An experienced staff is crucial to get through the critical month of June. Moms need to be weaned especially as days become longer and the weather hotter. Pens need to be maintained daily, floor boards removed and the fast-growing litter transitioned onto wet feed and water. Diets are adjusted and weaned females are under constant health checks. Once the kits are on feed and water, their growth is tremendous and the daily food volume rapidly increases to accommodate their needs. Vaccination done in July for all the kits includes a distemper shot and a 3-way vaccine to cover pseudomonas, enteritis and botulism. As the kits in the litter grow, they need to be separated down to more manageable numbers as they quickly outgrow their living quarters. Litter mates have to be broken down at just the right time so they don't fall behind.

5) Aug.1st – Oct.31st - **Growth**

At this time the mink are juveniles and will be full grown by Halloween. August to October are considered maintenance months- manure upkeep, pest control, cleaning and repairing pens/watering systems etc. in preparation for harvest. This season is extremely busy for the feed kitchen as tons of food daily is trucked in to be processed fresh or frozen for later use.

6) Nov.1st - Dec.31st – **Harvest**

As the different colours become prime, selection and harvest begin. If pelting is done on-site, this would commence as well. We work continuously on the task until the main harvest is completed. Time is of essence to get the majority of the crop harvested while the skins are perfectly prime and then also to process them in order to ship them out to meet the Auction House Sales tight deadlines.

I have outlined the importance of the production cycles and the excessive workloads required in raising mink. Unlike many agricultural industries we are not automated. We must follow the "B.C Mink Farming Act" as well as take part in a third-party audit to follow the "Mink Care Assessment Program" developed by the "National Farm Animal Care Council (NFACC)". For both these codes of practice we need to be diligent on the welfare needs of the animals or very quickly we are not in compliance.

In our production cycle overview, I have touched only on the staff who are actually working with the animals. Mink farming also includes supporting staff for other areas of our operations such as feed production and the logistics involved in the trucking of our feed supplies. Some mink producers in B.C make as much as 100,000 LBS of mink feed per day to feed the herd. Chicken/Duck/Fish/Hatcheries/Slaughter houses/etc. all rely on our industry to keep their operations flowing smoothly. We are an important component of by-product removal for human consumption food production industries. A hiccup on our side of the business will inevitably cause a ripple effect to many other industries.

As Government authorities and mink producers alike are learning more about how SARS/Covid outbreaks affect mink herds we ask for a consensus on responding to a potential outbreak in order that our business can continue to operate in a safe manner for both our staff and our animals. It is essential that employees and mink related supplies are able to move in and out. The mink industry in B.C takes the precaution of Public Health and the safety of staff as our top priority. We can have the proper PPE and protocols in place so we can care for our animals and not be quarantined to the farm. We ask for Covid vaccinations for owners and staff on mink farms as we are considered high risk. New information has been coming out from infected farms globally. In some U.S states the quarantines are being lifted on

outbreak farms. The mink is proven to eventually shed the virus and the risk of virus mutations has not been substantiated. Additionally, on a US farm 'mink covid' vaccine trials have been initiated and the outlook is promising that a vaccine for mink is soon to be forthcoming.

In conclusion, I would like to add a note about the fur market over the last few years. It is well known that the past 5 years have been very tough for mink breeders all across the globe. Mink farming historically has been known to have large swings in pelt market value due to supply and demand and the last few years have seen a major decline in prices owing to global over-production. These past few months we have observed the inventory supply balance leaning towards our favor and have seen a 30-50% rise in pelt prices at recent auctions held in Dec 2020. We expect this trend to continue as the worldwide pelt production has decreased drastically. B.C producers are family run farms that have suffered through the low prices and continued on because we believe that our industry and our operations will recover. Many employees depend on our farms for their livelihood and have supported us through these tough times. We believe that the mink farming agricultural industry can survive the challenge of Covid and we rely on the government and related agencies to be there to support us.

s.79

President, B.C.M.P.A

s.79

Jan. 27, 2021.

During the meeting, the Minister is seeking your input on the following questions:

Question 1

Please share any comments regarding how COVID-19 has impacted your interests/activities? Challenges? Needs?

Covid has impacted our industry drastically as follows:

- Fur is an agricultural commodity that is marketed internationally. The Covid pandemic has prevented fur buyers from travelling internationally and attending Fur Auctions.
- It has created a logistics shipping nightmare and drastically increased the expense of shipping pelts.
- The shut down of our major market (China) due to Covid occurred just as the first of the seasonal Fur Auctions were scheduled to begin. Other countries soon followed China's lead with quarantine requirements and disallowed travel.
- Covid forced the postponement of Auction dates and then ultimately banned the physical attendance of buyers at the Auctions which is so important for the hands-on inspection of goods. Online Auctions were set up as an alternative method of sale but were not effective. The 2021 market season is still not able to provide the important physical Auction format.
- The lack of cash flow from non existent sales is a major financial issue. Farmers who are financed cannot renew financing until the previous season's crops are sold. Self financed farms find themselves with no revenues to raise the next crop. Many government programs (such as CEWS) are not conducive to our niche market as our revenue is realised from seasonal sales and not the typical month over month reporting as in many industries.
- The challenge of keeping our herds Covid free is a stressful concern given that mink are susceptible to the Corona virus.
- **Comments from outbreak farms:** A farm which is locked down currently has an excessive amount of work left to the few staff which are only permitted on site. These
s.79 Low staff, long hours and government officials not able to make decisions or answer questions in a timely manner has given no consideration to the mental or physical well being of the farmer or the employees. Farms are living entities. Government bodies need to work together to keep vital documentations flowing for approval so that essential farming tasks can continue.

Question #2

What do you view as being the main challenges facing the fur farming industry in B.C.?

- A constant in our industry is the Anti Fur Sentiment/Animal Rights movement and general public misconception about fur.
- Mink farmers view Government agencies as having a negative political approach to fur farming because of a stance based on the populations misunderstanding of the mink industry. The challenge comes from the lack of support for fur farming from the Ministry leaders themselves (re: the recent SPCA petition to ban fur farming after a Covid ranch outbreak or local celebrities spewing untruths to media). Fur farming is subject to strict protocols and must comply to Provincial and National level certifications. As a legal and licensed farming business we should not have to be harassed by animal rights activists and left to cope with this element on our own.
- Fur is not a supply managed commodity and we are prone to market fluctuations depending on global production. Unfortunately, we are not able to control the fur output produced world wide and face the economic swings from the trials of supply and demand.
- In addition to our usual operational pressures Covid has become the major stress point today. The challenge has been working with Public health and the entity of attached agencies which is very costly in time and resources especially for a small association such as ours. We do not have large marketing boards or research teams dedicated to our industry. For farm owners it has been extremely stressful to decipher and implement the massive number of changes required for our industry.

Question #3

What do you view as being potential solutions?

- When challenged by animal rights or the SPCA we need positive vocal support from the Ministry thru media or other social outlets. The BC SPCA participates with the National Farm Animal Care Council (NFACC) to develop codes of practice for the care and handling of farm animals NOT to petition the elimination of an industry! We need the Agriculture Minister to lead the recognition of our industry as a renewable and self-sustaining industry and support it as a green decomposable clothing solution to help reduce the worldwide plastic and micro plastic disaster. We need an advocate to validate fur farming as an important part of BC agriculture and not respond with the silence that has been the norm over the past many years.
- Encouraging Covid solutions include access to vaccine for our employees and the arrival of a vaccine currently being developed specifically for mink. In the event of a possible outbreak on a farm we look forward to dialogue and cooperation from Public Health and

it's various Government agencies so that we are able to navigate through Covid and can remain operational going forward.

Question #4

What do you view as being the implications of the potential solutions?

- The fur industry is more important than how it is currently recognized. With Ministry support we can provide a strong and viable fur industry in the Province of BC which includes commercial family farms along side with the BC trappers and the Indigenous community.

Question #5

What are some opportunities for the future of the fur farming industry in B.C.?

- BC is a good place to raise mink. The weather, feed supplies and labour market are key success points for our industry.
- Raising fur is a very hands-on business and fur farmers hire a significant number of local people at above minimum wage. We provide the opportunity of long-term employment and careers.
- Due to today's historically low worldwide pelt inventory the future of the fur market is encouraging. Increased prices allow farmers to develop their farms and diversify their operations. It is important to know that Fur is sold at international markets and brings in millions of foreign dollars, which is positive for the economic trade balance.
- The world's finest quality and colour of mink are produced on BC farms. We are not a fly-by-night industry, we are multi generational farms and have been an integral part of BC agriculture for well over 100 years. BC trade ministers should be promoting this asset.
- Fur can be farmed on the least expensive real estate in BC and does not need huge sections of land to operate.
- Similar to other agricultural commodities the number of mink farms has decreased but the quantity of the fur product that is coming out of BC is stable.
- The manure and carcass waste from mink farms is well sought after by local farmers and recyclers.
- We are a true recycling industry. We provide an alternative source for many large egg, poultry, and beef food processors to rid their by-products. We are also large consumers of grain and fishery waste product. The list of human food processors that we do business

with is far reaching. In short, we are totally in line with raising a natural product. We are poster examples of the Go Green B.C. logo!

Question #6

Is there any other information that you would like to provide to the Minister with respect to the fur farming industry in B.C.?

- Being that the fur farm industry is not known to most does not negate that it is an important part of Canadian heritage. There is a small vocal segment of the general population who publicize their opinion that there is not a valid need for fur in the world today. The actual truth is that there is a strong market for fur in numerous countries. Sixty percent of all fur sold goes to 3 cities in China. As an example: the mean temperature in Harbin China over the winter months is -12C. People in Harbin and other cold parts of the world wear fur not only for fashion but as a source for warmth. The attention of our industry does not focus on national markets rather we look at Moscow, Harbin, and Seoul for our indicators.
- Due to a lack of communication and the deficiency of vocal ministry support for the Fur industry we, as fur farmers, are **rightfully wary of the governments agenda** regarding our industry.
- It is our hope that better communication and understanding between the government and mink farmers can strengthen the recognition of the Fur Industry as the vital asset to BC agriculture that it is. We need that assurance from our government.

s.79

President, B.C.M.P.A

s.79

Knox, Graham G AFF:EX

From: s.79
Sent: December 15, 2020 6:02 PM
To: Knox, Graham G AGRI:EX
Subject: Re: Covid-19 Lower Mainland Mink Farm - Information for the BC Mink Producers Association

[EXTERNAL] This email came from an external source. Only open attachments or links that you are expecting from a known sender.

Hi there. I'm available now, or anytime after 10am tomorrow. Do you have my number?

Thank you.

s.79

On Dec 15, 2020, at 17:55, Knox, Graham G AGRI:EX <Graham.Knox@gov.bc.ca> wrote:

Hello s.79

My name is Graham Knox and I am supporting the BC Ministry of Agriculture's response to the current situation involving the outbreak of Covid-19 at the mink farm in the Lower Mainland. We recognize how challenging this situation is for the impacted producer and the significant concerns this is likely generating around your industry and association. The ministry is continuing to work directly with the impacted producer and the other agencies involved to resolve the situation and support the producer. Our Chief Veterinarian, Dr. Rayna Gunvaldsen, who I understand you have been communicating with to date, will continue to work directly with the impacted producer while other members of our team will be supporting her by taking on some of the other aspects of the response including liaising with you and your association. We want to ensure that you and the other mink farmers in the province have the information you require to protect your operations and address your outstanding concerns as the incident continues to unfold. In order to assist with getting you and your members the information you require I thought it would be helpful to arrange an initial call with you to discuss how we can best meet you and your member's information needs.

Please let me know if you are interested and available, and if so what date / times would work best for you in regards to scheduling a call?

Thank you,

Graham Knox
AGRI Incident Commander
Director, Climate Action and Emergency Management
Innovation and Adaptation Services Branch
BC Ministry of Agriculture
Phone: 778-698-4949

Cell: 250-886-4761
AGRI Emergency Management

Knox, Graham G AFF:EX

From: s.79
Sent: December 15, 2020 6:32 PM
To: Knox, Graham G AGRI:EX
Subject: Re: Tentative: Covid-19 Lower Mainland Mink Farm - Information for the BC Mink Producers Association

[EXTERNAL] This email came from an external source. Only open attachments or links that you are expecting from a known sender.

Sorry. My email glitched there. I'm in.

I'll Skype in tmr at 11am. Thank you and we'll talk soon.

s.79

> On Dec 15, 2020, at 18:28, ^{s.79} wrote:
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>

Knox, Graham G AFF:EX

From: s.79
Sent: December 16, 2020 8:25 AM
To: Knox, Graham G AGRI:EX
Cc: Viney, Ursula E AGRI:EX; Gunvaldsen, Rayna AGRI:EX
Subject: Re: Covid-19 Lower Mainland Mink Farm - Information for the BC Mink Producers Association

[EXTERNAL] This email came from an external source. Only open attachments or links that you are expecting from a known sender.

I'm sorry. Something has come up. I have an important meeting from 11-12pm with our National Association (CMBA).

Can we move our meeting earlier or after please?

s.79

On Dec 15, 2020, at 17:55, Knox, Graham G AGRI:EX <Graham.Knox@gov.bc.ca> wrote:

Hello^{s.79}

My name is Graham Knox and I am supporting the BC Ministry of Agriculture's response to the current situation involving the outbreak of Covid-19 at the mink farm in the Lower Mainland. We recognize how challenging this situation is for the impacted producer and the significant concerns this is likely generating around your industry and association. The ministry is continuing to work directly with the impacted producer and the other agencies involved to resolve the situation and support the producer. Our Chief Veterinarian, Dr. Rayna Gunvaldsen, who I understand you have been communicating with to date, will continue to work directly with the impacted producer while other members of our team will be supporting her by taking on some of the other aspects of the response including liaising with you and your association. We want to ensure that you and the other mink farmers in the province have the information you require to protect your operations and address your outstanding concerns as the incident continues to unfold. In order to assist with getting you and your members the information you require I thought it would be helpful to arrange an initial call with you to discuss how we can best meet you and your member's information needs.

Please let me know if you are interested and available, and if so what date / times would work best for you in regards to scheduling a call?

Thank you,

Graham Knox
AGRI Incident Commander
Director, Climate Action and Emergency Management
Innovation and Adaptation Services Branch
BC Ministry of Agriculture
Phone: 778-698-4949

Cell: 250-886-4761
AGRI Emergency Management

Knox, Graham G AFF:EX

From: s.79
Sent: December 16, 2020 8:56 AM
To: Knox, Graham G AGRI:EX
Subject: Re: Accepted: Covid-19 Lower Mainland Mink Farm - Information for the BC Mink Producers Association

[EXTERNAL] This email came from an external source. Only open attachments or links that you are expecting from a known sender.

Thanks for accommodating.

Can you send me login details again pls.

When I accept calendar invitations, I lose the login details due to a glitch.

Thank you

s.79

> On Dec 16, 2020, at 08:53, s.79 wrote:
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>

Knox, Graham G AFF:EX

From: s.79
Sent: December 16, 2020 6:19 PM
To: Knox, Graham G AGRI:EX; Viney, Ursula E AGRI:EX; Hughes, Marie Julie AGRI:EX
Subject: Today's talk.

[EXTERNAL] This email came from an external source. Only open attachments or links that you are expecting from a known sender.

I have let all the producers know about this task force the Ministry has setup for us. It was well welcomed. They all know Julie - and now know - if they need any support, or have any questions to contact her.

I wanted to briefly touch on one of the topics from today...

I was thinking about breeding season and whelping time. At the minimum, mink ranches would need 1 employee per 1000 breeding females (10,000 breeding females = 10 employees). This would be very rough for the farmer, but just possible enough to manage. At those seasons we are swamped! We would normally have 1.5 employees per 1000. More if we can find them.

If for whatever reason we cannot have the one man per 1000, we would not be able to operate. Any more than two days with no staff during breeding season, it very likely could devastate production. The heat cycles are very complex.

Baby time speaks for itself. We need to be there.

I understand this is not a "now" problem and we have more hurdles to get through first. But, in your meetings, we should have these problems in the back of our heads.

These seasons cannot be pushed around. Some of the most important welfare concerns the mink need annually, are when the moms are weaning and the kits are growing. They need very close attention and diet adjustments weekly. Or, there is a very serious problem, very fast.

I appreciate the ministry for getting this setup so we can communicate more clearly to each other. For now, let's hope all these tests on our staff come back good so we can focus on more important matters.

s.22

Thank you.

s.79

President, BCMPPA
Management, s.79

Knox, Graham G AFF:EX

From: s.79
Sent: December 24, 2020 12:50 PM
To: Knox, Graham G AGRI:EX
Cc: Viney, Ursula E AGRI:EX; Gunvaldsen, Rayna AGRI:EX; Boelens, Robert GCPE:EX
Subject: Re: Advanced Notice - Mink on second farm test positive for COVID-19 virus

[EXTERNAL] This email came from an external source. Only open attachments or links that you are expecting from a known sender.

Well. This is really unfortunate. I don't know what to say at the moment.

I'll pass it along to our producers.

s.79

On Dec 24, 2020, at 11:50, Knox, Graham G AGRI:EX <Graham.Knox@gov.bc.ca> wrote:

Hi s.79

We have some unfortunate news to share with you today regarding confirmation of a 2nd mink farm in the lower mainland testing positive for Covid-19 in the mink. We will be issuing a news release shortly (an excerpt included below) regarding these test results so we wanted share this information with you and your members in advance.

Mink on second farm test positive for COVID-19 virus

VICTORIA— Three mink that died on a second Fraser Valley mink farm have tested positive for SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19 in humans.

The Chief Veterinarian for B.C. has placed the farm under a quarantine order prohibiting the movement of animals and materials from the property to minimize the risk of the virus spreading. A plan is in place to provide feed and care to the mink during the outbreak that respects the conditions of the quarantine and maintains both worker and mink safety. No workers on the farm have tested positive for COVID-19 to date.

The three mink were tested after some animals in the herd experienced diarrhoea which can be a sign of COVID-19 in mink. A total of 23 animals died on the farm between December 19-23. The farm has approximately 1,000 animals. It is not currently known how the mink contracted the virus.

Please contact me if you have any additional questions at this time or if there is any further assistance the ministry can provide at this time.

Thank you,

Graham Knox
Director, Climate Action and Emergency Management
Innovation and Adaptation Services Branch
BC Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries
Phone: 778-698-4949
Cell: 250-886-4761
[AGRI Emergency Management](#)

Knox, Graham G AFF:EX

From: s.79
Sent: December 28, 2020 11:25 AM
To: Hughes, Marie Julie AGRI:EX
Cc: Knox, Graham G AGRI:EX; Viney, Ursula E AGRI:EX; Gunvaldsen, Rayna AGRI:EX
Subject: Re: Status of Pelting / Interest in a Townhall Meeting

[EXTERNAL] This email came from an external source. Only open attachments or links that you are expecting from a known sender.

Hi everyone.

Can we arrange a town-hall for next week (week of Jan.4)? We are currently discussing topics/problems as a group and will be needing to continue those talks with you next week.

Just wanted to give you a heads up for preparation.

I think it should not be a problem to do the town-hall during business hours.

Let me know what day/time works for you and who will be on the conference.

Thanks

s.79

President, BCMPPA

s.79

On Dec 21, 2020, at 14:48, Hughes, Marie Julie AGRI:EX <MarieJulie.Hughes@gov.bc.ca> wrote:

Good afternoon everyone,

As^{s.79} mentioned to all of you last week, the Ministry of Agriculture has a task force monitoring and responding to the ongoing COVID-19 in mink situation. One of the questions that came up at today's meeting is whether all of you have finished pelting for this year – I know some of you have finished, and some of you were close to finishing last week, however, if you could let me know what the status is on your farm as far as how close you are to finishing pelting, that would be great.

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Looking forward to hearing from you and assisting in any way I can,

Julie

(Marie) Julie Hughes
Compliance, Operations and Data Officer
British Columbia Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries
1767 Angus Campbell Road, Abbotsford, BC V3G 2M3
Tel: 778-666-0560
Mariejulie.hughes@gov.bc.ca
www.gov.bc.ca/animalhealthcentre

<image003.jpg>

Knox, Graham G AFF:EX

From: s.79
Sent: December 29, 2020 10:18 AM
To: Hughes, Marie Julie AGRI:EX
Cc: Knox, Graham G AGRI:EX; Viney, Ursula E AGRI:EX; Gunvaldsen, Rayna AGRI:EX
Subject: Re: Status of Pelting / Interest in a Townhall Meeting

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I will let you know tomorrow Julie. I will get the answers tonight.

s.79

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<image003.jpg>

Knox, Graham G AFF:EX

From: s.79
Sent: December 30, 2020 10:05 AM
To: Hughes, Marie Julie AGRI:EX
Cc: Knox, Graham G AGRI:EX; Viney, Ursula E AGRI:EX; Gunvaldsen, Rayna AGRI:EX
Subject: Re: Townhall Meeting / Exporting Pelts to the US

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Hi there. We had a meeting last night with all BCMPA members attending.

BCMPA requests a town-hall with staff from the Ministry of Ag and Public Health. No need for WorkSafe.

We have questions regarding the Health order, shipping our skins to sale, immediate vaccinations for producers, where our blood went, and some other odds and ends. We may just do more listening than talking. So far I think the producers have been cooperating pretty good and now we need to talk a bit.

There will be roughly 12 of us on the zoom. Owners.

s.79

On Dec 29, 2020, at 11:51, Hughes, Marie Julie AGRI:EX <MarieJulie.Hughes@gov.bc.ca> wrote:

Thanks s.79

On another matter, Dr. Rayna wanted to ensure that you and the other BC mink producers are aware that if you plan to export pelts to the US, you should contact the individual state you are shipping to, to find out if there are any restrictions on importing mink products at this time.

Julie

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Knox, Graham G AFF:EX

From: s.79
Sent: December 31, 2020 12:14 PM
To: Hughes, Marie Julie AGRI:EX
Cc: Viney, Ursula E AGRI:EX; Gunvaldsen, Rayna AGRI:EX; Knox, Graham G AGRI:EX
Subject: Re: Update Meeting Regarding SARS-CoV-2

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Hi Julie.

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I'm going to need the weekend here to put everything together. I would like to start my report and see if I'm missing anything. I will also get more detailed questions sent to you.

Happy New Year all. Talk very soon.

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As you know the producers better than we do, will they feel comfortable openly sharing their questions with this many government staff? If you don't think they will, it is possible for us to reduce the number of government attendees, we wanted to make sure that we have the appropriate staff available to answer any questions industry may have.

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<image001.jpg>

<Draft Agenda Update Meeting on SARS-CoV-2 with the BC mink industry.docx>

Knox, Graham G AFF:EX

From: s.79
Sent: January 2, 2021 1:03 PM
To: Hughes, Marie Julie AGRI:EX
Cc: Viney, Ursula E AGRI:EX; Gunvaldsen, Rayna AGRI:EX; Knox, Graham G AGRI:EX
Subject: Re: Update Meeting Regarding SARS-CoV-2

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<image002.jpg>

From: s.79

Sent: December 31, 2020 12:14 PM

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Cc: Viney, Ursula E AGRI:EX <Ursula.Viney@gov.bc.ca>; Gunvaldsen, Rayna AGRI:EX <Rayna.Gunvaldsen@gov.bc.ca>; Knox, Graham G AGRI:EX <Graham.Knox@gov.bc.ca>

Subject: Re: Update Meeting Regarding SARS-CoV-2

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<image001.jpg>

<Draft Agenda Update Meeting on SARS-CoV-2 with the BC mink industry.docx>

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From: s.79
Sent: January 4, 2021 2:07 PM
To: Hughes, Marie Julie AGRI:EX
Cc: Viney, Ursula E AGRI:EX; Gunvaldsen, Rayna AGRI:EX; Knox, Graham G AGRI:EX
Subject: Re: Update Meeting Regarding SARS-CoV-2
Attachments: BCMPA Questions 2021.docx

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Hi Julie.

Below is a list of BCMPA questions. There could be one or two straggler questions, but for the importance of arranging the agenda I'll send off what we have for now.

In the event that other questions are needed, we'll bring them up in the Q&A part of the meeting.

Also, thank you for the extra time for my portion. It is yet not determined if I will require the whole half hour. For sure more than 10min, yet less than 30min.

Thank you.

s.79

On Jan 4, 2021, at 08:26, Hughes, Marie Julie AGRI:EX <MarieJulie.Hughes@gov.bc.ca> wrote:

Good morning^{s.79}

I just spoke with Ursula, and yes, we can adjust the schedule to give you 30 minutes for your presentation. Thank you for providing Dr. McDermid and Mr. Moses' email addresses. Once you provide me with the detailed questions I will revise the agenda and send it out to all parties.

Julie

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Cc: Viney, Ursula E AGRI:EX <Ursula.Viney@gov.bc.ca>; Gunvaldsen, Rayna AGRI:EX <Rayna.Gunvaldsen@gov.bc.ca>; Knox, Graham G AGRI:EX <Graham.Knox@gov.bc.ca>

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<image001.jpg>

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Subject: Re: Update Meeting Regarding SARS-CoV-2

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Yes. I've tentatively told them that time already. Just awaiting for confirmation from you. I also told Matt Moses that, as it will be evening for him (Nova Scotia).

FYI. Another thing. I'm sure you guys are on it considering it's Government, but there is a small concern about security. Activists have been known to try and smuggle there way onto our meetings. There have been breaches in the industry globally regarding these Zoom meetings. Nothing in B.C, but I have heard of problems from other associations. With so many people on the call, it'll be quite a bit of work for someone.

s.79

On Jan 4, 2021, at 14:12, Hughes, Marie Julie AGRI:EX <MarieJulie.Hughes@gov.bc.ca> wrote:

Hi^{s.79}

Thanks for getting me your questions. I will revise the agenda and send it out, hopefully by the end of the day. Will Thursday, January 7th from 2 – 4 pm work for you and the other producers?

Julie

(Marie) Julie Hughes
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British Columbia Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries
1767 Angus Campbell Road, Abbotsford, BC V3G 2M3
Tel: 778-666-0560
Mariejulie.hughes@gov.bc.ca
www.gov.bc.ca/animalhealthcentre

<image002.jpg>

From^{s.79}
Sent: January 4, 2021 2:07 PM
To: Hughes, Marie Julie AGRI:EX <MarieJulie.Hughes@gov.bc.ca>

Cc: Viney, Ursula E AGRI:EX <Ursula.Viney@gov.bc.ca>; Gunvaldsen, Rayna AGRI:EX <Rayna.Gunvaldsen@gov.bc.ca>; Knox, Graham G AGRI:EX <Graham.Knox@gov.bc.ca>
Subject: Re: Update Meeting Regarding SARS-CoV-2

[EXTERNAL] This email came from an external source. Only open attachments or links that you are expecting from a known sender.

Hi Julie.

Below is a list of BCMPA questions. There could be one or two straggler questions, but for the importance of arranging the agenda I'll send off what we have for now.

In the event that other questions are needed, we'll bring them up in the Q&A part of the meeting.

Also, thank you for the extra time for my portion. It is yet not determined if I will require the whole half hour. For sure more than 10min, yet less than 30min.

Thank you.

s.79

On Jan 4, 2021, at 08:26, Hughes, Marie Julie AGRI:EX <MarieJulie.Hughes@gov.bc.ca> wrote:

Good morning^{s.79}

I just spoke with Ursula, and yes, we can adjust the schedule to give you 30 minutes for your presentation. Thank you for providing Dr. McDermid and Mr. Moses' email addresses. Once you provide me with the detailed questions I will revise the agenda and send it out to all parties.

Julie

(Marie) Julie Hughes
Compliance, Operations and Data Officer
British Columbia Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries
1767 Angus Campbell Road, Abbotsford, BC V3G 2M3
Tel: 778-666-0560
Mariejulie.hughes@gov.bc.ca
www.gov.bc.ca/animalhealthcentre

<image002.jpg>

From^{s.79}

Sent: January 2, 2021 1:03 PM

To: Hughes, Marie Julie AGRI:EX <MarieJulie.Hughes@gov.bc.ca>
Cc: Viney, Ursula E AGRI:EX <Ursula.Viney@gov.bc.ca>; Gunvaldsen, Rayna AGRI:EX <Rayna.Gunvaldsen@gov.bc.ca>; Knox, Graham G AGRI:EX <Graham.Knox@gov.bc.ca>
Subject: Re: Update Meeting Regarding SARS-CoV-2

[EXTERNAL] This email came from an external source. Only open attachments or links that you are expecting from a known sender.

Hi Julie.

I've been working on our report (snapshot) of the B.C mink industry. I quickly have found that 10min is not enough time. Is there more time possibly available? Looks like we need around 1/2 an hour to properly inform everyone. Can you please let me know if you can find some more time.

I've talked to both Daniel Schwartz and Dr. McDermid ^{s.22} They both would like to participate.

Also, we would like the President of CMBA in as well. Matt Moses
^{s.22}

I will be submitting detailed questions to you on Monday.

Thank you.

^{s.79}

On Dec 31, 2020, at 12:58, Hughes, Marie Julie AGRI:EX <MarieJulie.Hughes@gov.bc.ca> wrote:

Hi ^{s.79}

Thank you for getting back to me. We will definitely invite Dr. McDermid and Dr. Schwartz (we have his contact information, so we will reach out). As soon as you get me your detailed questions, we will forward them on to Public Health so they can get the information they need to hopefully provide you with answers. The tentative date and time for the meeting is Thursday, January 7th from 2 – 4; however, I am still waiting to hear back from some people to find out if they can attend at that time.

Wishing you and yours a happy, healthy, safe 2021,

Julie

(Marie) Julie Hughes
Compliance, Operations and Data Officer
British Columbia Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries
1767 Angus Campbell Road, Abbotsford, BC V3G 2M3
Tel: 778-666-0560
Mariejulie.hughes@gov.bc.ca
www.gov.bc.ca/animalhealthcentre

<image002.jpg>

From: s.79

Sent: December 31, 2020 12:14 PM

To: Hughes, Marie Julie AGRI:EX <MarieJulie.Hughes@gov.bc.ca>

Cc: Viney, Ursula E AGRI:EX <Ursula.Viney@gov.bc.ca>; Gunvaldsen, Rayna AGRI:EX <Rayna.Gunvaldsen@gov.bc.ca>; Knox, Graham G AGRI:EX <Graham.Knox@gov.bc.ca>

Subject: Re: Update Meeting Regarding SARS-CoV-2

[EXTERNAL] This email came from an external source. Only open attachments or links that you are expecting from a known sender.

Hi Julie.

I think we want everyone on the call. We want to clearly explain what we need to operate, while taking Public Health as top priority.

I will do a 10 minute overview of the BC industry for sure. This is very important to get our message out. I may get 1 other producer to help out with particular part of the snapshot, but has yet to be decided.

We also would like to add a couple more attendees. Dr. Dan McDermid (our industry vet) for starters. I am trying to get ahold of Daniel Schwartz from CFIA. We would like him to come on as well. He is knowledgeable of our industry and is working closely with CMBA regarding the recent outbreaks. We may ask the President of CMBA to come on as well, but that hasn't been decided yet.

I'm going to need the weekend here to put everything together. I would like to start my report and see if I'm missing anything. I will also get more detailed questions sent to you.

Happy New Year all. Talk very soon.

s.79

On Dec 30, 2020, at 16:55, Hughes, Marie Julie AGRI:EX
<MarieJulie.Hughes@gov.bc.ca> wrote:

Hj.79

I have attached a draft of the agenda for next week's meeting, you will notice the day and time are still to be determined, I am waiting to hear back from Public Health as to their availability, then will check with you to coordinate scheduling.

Would it be possible for you to do a ten minute overview of fur farming in BC during the meeting? Many of the participants really don't know a lot about fur farming and this would give you a great opportunity to educate them, particularly on the size of the industry, distribution of producers, production cycle and marketing. As well, if you could share any upcoming critical on farm activities (such as breeding season).

As you know the producers better than we do, will they feel comfortable openly sharing their questions with this many government staff? If you don't think they will, it is possible for us to reduce the number of government attendees, we wanted to make sure that we have the appropriate staff available to answer any questions industry may have.

Public Health has asked if you can provide a specific list of questions to ensure that they get the producers the answers that they need, as you will see I have provided them with the questions that were in your email, however, if you can provide me with more detailed questions, I will update the agenda accordingly.

You will notice that there is a representative of the Canadian Food Inspection Agency, they are there as an observer and in case any questions arise that they would need to respond to. However, if you don't feel a need to have them attend, let me know and we won't invite them.

If you would like to see anything else added to the agenda, please let me know. Thanks,

Julie

(Marie) Julie Hughes
Compliance, Operations and Data Officer
British Columbia Ministry of Agriculture, Food and
Fisheries
1767 Angus Campbell Road, Abbotsford, BC V3G 2M3
Tel: 778-666-0560
Mariejulie.hughes@gov.bc.ca
www.gov.bc.ca/animalhealthcentre

<image001.jpg>

<Draft Agenda Update Meeting on SARS-CoV-2 with the
BC mink industry.docx>

Knox, Graham G AFF:EX

From: s.79
Sent: January 8, 2021 5:36 PM
To: Knox, Graham G AGRI:EX
Cc: Viney, Ursula E AGRI:EX
Subject: Re: Covid Mink 2020 - Debrief on Thursday's Meeting with Producers

[EXTERNAL] This email came from an external source. Only open attachments or links that you are expecting from a known sender.

Hi Graham and Ursula. Thank you both for facilitating the meeting yesterday. It's a lot to take in for everyone involved and I realize/appreciate your handling of the meeting - especially as time ran out.

I can be available on either day. Let me know a time that works. After 1030am is usually best as the mornings are busy organizing staff.

Let me know. Thx

s.79

On Jan 8, 2021, at 17:14, Knox, Graham G AGRI:EX <Graham.Knox@gov.bc.ca> wrote:

Hi s.79

Ursula and I were hoping to schedule a 30 minute phone call with you next week to debrief on yesterday's call and discuss any follow-up activities. If you are available to meet just let us know what times would work for you on either Monday or Wednesday and we'll work to schedule the call.

A big thank you to and your members again for the all of the information and concerns that were shared!

Sincerely,

Graham Knox
Incident Commander – Covid Mink 2020
Director, Climate Action and Emergency Management
Innovation and Adaptation Services Branch
BC Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries
Phone: 778-698-4949
Cell: 250-886-4761
[AGRI Emergency Management](#)

Knox, Graham G AFF:EX

From: s.79
Sent: January 10, 2021 6:34 PM
To: Hughes, Marie Julie AGRI:EX
Cc: Knox, Graham G AGRI:EX; Gunvaldsen, Rayna AGRI:EX; Viney, Ursula E AGRI:EX; Daniel Schwartz; Oldham, Lisa E AFF:EX; Blair Choquette
Subject: BCMPA - PLS Fwd to Public Health!

[EXTERNAL] This email came from an external source. Only open attachments or links that you are expecting from a known sender.

Urgent Attention to: Public Health and Town Hall participants

Re: Town hall outcome (Thursday, Jan. 7th 2021).

Hello,

It is coming up to a month since BC Mink farmers received the Covid Public Health Order. The order hit us hard at our crucial harvest season and in spite of the extremely tough timeline I believe we have all cooperated fully to date and complied 100%. We have been requested to continue sending mortalities in for testing and we want to set that up but we need a little help coming from your end.

We need solutions now that work for both Public Health and mink farmers. Farmers have received little information regarding both the findings on blood samples demanded from our staff and on the mortality samples taken from farms currently assumed non infected. Outbreak farms struggle as they live in limbo as far as receiving clarity on how to move forward. Feedback to the industry in general is non-existent. While we totally understand that the pandemic has brought about uncharted challenges for Public Health we also recognize, as seen from the outcome of the recent Town Hall meeting, that mink farmers are more than frustrated and stressed to an unhealthy level over the lack of answers offered back to us. An agricultural industry such as ours that raises an annual crop does not have the ability to stand still and postpone decision making. The ability to care properly for our animals and any options farmers and their employees have for a continued livelihood is fast becoming exhausted.

As an example I can only speak for s.79 as I stress with extreme seriousness that our farm NEEDS to ship pelts this week. We have been forced to delay shipment well past what is normally viable to make sales schedules. Every pelt from which I am speaking of is from an animal harvested prior to the order - from a non outbreak farm. If we have any chance to be catalogued for upcoming Auction dates our 85,000+ pelts have to be shipped to market this week. We absolutely need the proceeds from the sale of these pelts in order to feed our mink, pay our staff and repay FCC and APP government loans due in a few months. Unless the government has immediate plans to support us financially we will have no cash flow and have a serious problem. Our farm situation mirrors every mink farm in BC.

We need to be pro-active and get the 'non-infected' pelts off the farm not only for financial reasons but also to simplify things in case Covid does present a problem in the future. This is priority number one! None of us can predict what the future will bring. We will tackle that as it comes and fully expect to continue to cooperate with Public Health should a situation arise.

Someone from Public Health has to make the decision to release pelts from non outbreak farms harvested prior to the Order. The industry believes that there has been a reasonable amount of time given to research and support that release.

To avoid further unnecessary hardship - we need answers ... We need to find a workable solution immediately that satisfies both Public Health and mink farmers.

Please advise as soon as possible.

Sincerely,
s.79

For s.79

And the BCMPPA in general.

Knox, Graham G AFF:EX

From: s.79
Sent: January 11, 2021 12:25 PM
To: Knox, Graham G AGRI:EX
Cc: Viney, Ursula E AGRI:EX
Subject: Re: Covid Mink 2020 - Debrief on Thursday's Meeting with Producers

[EXTERNAL] This email came from an external source. Only open attachments or links that you are expecting from a known sender.

Hi there.

I checked with the office and s.79 sent protocols to Public Health (Blair) on Dec. 21st.

He confirmed that he received.

s.79

On Jan 8, 2021, at 17:36, s.79 > wrote:

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Let me know. Thx

s.79

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A big thank you to and your members again for the all of the information and concerns that were shared!

Sincerely,

Graham Knox
Incident Commander – Covid Mink 2020
Director, Climate Action and Emergency Management
Innovation and Adaptation Services Branch
BC Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries
Phone: 778-698-4949
Cell: 250-886-4761
AGRI Emergency Management

Knox, Graham G AFF:EX

From: Knox, Graham G AGRI:EX
Sent: January 11, 2021 12:26 PM
To: s.79
Cc: Viney, Ursula E AGRI:EX
Subject: RE: Covid Mink 2020 - Debrief on Thursday's Meeting with Producers

Okay – thank you!

From: s.79
Sent: January 11, 2021 12:25 PM
To: Knox, Graham G AGRI:EX <Graham.Knox@gov.bc.ca>
Cc: Viney, Ursula E AGRI:EX <Ursula.Viney@gov.bc.ca>
Subject: Re: Covid Mink 2020 - Debrief on Thursday's Meeting with Producers

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Director, Climate Action and Emergency Management
Innovation and Adaptation Services Branch
BC Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries
Phone: 778-698-4949
Cell: 250-886-4761
AGRI Emergency Management

Knox, Graham G AFF:EX

Subject: Re: Covid Mink 2020 - Debrief on Thursday's Meeting with Producers
Location: Skype Meeting

Start: Mon 2021-01-11 11:30 AM
End: Mon 2021-01-11 12:00 PM
Show Time As: Tentative

Recurrence: (none)

Meeting Status: Not yet responded

Organizer: Knox, Graham G AGRI:EX
Required Attendees: s.79 Viney, Ursula E AGRI:EX

Meeting invite as discussed.

Thanks,

Graham

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Toll-Free: +1 (888) 952-9304, ^{s.15}	(BC, Canada)	English (United States)
Local - Kamloops: +1 (250) 554-7244,, ^{s.15}	(BC, Canada)	English (United States)
Local - Prince George: +1 (250) 645-9304,, ^{s.15}	(BC, Canada)	English (United States)
Local - Nelson: +1 (778) 671-9304, ^{s.15}	(BC, Canada)	English (United States)

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Conference ID:^{s.15}

[Forgot your dial-in PIN?](#) | [Help](#)

Knox, Graham G AFF:EX

From: Knox, Graham G AGRI:EX
Sent: January 8, 2021 5:14 PM
To: s.79
Cc: Viney, Ursula E AGRI:EX
Subject: Covid Mink 2020 - Debrief on Thursday's Meeting with Producers

Hi s.79

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Sincerely,

Graham Knox
Incident Commander – Covid Mink 2020
Director, Climate Action and Emergency Management
Innovation and Adaptation Services Branch
BC Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries
Phone: 778-698-4949
Cell: 250-886-4761
[AGRI Emergency Management](#)

Knox, Graham G AFF:EX

From: Knox, Graham G AGRI:EX
Sent: December 24, 2020 11:49 AM
To: s.79
Cc: Viney, Ursula E AGRI:EX; Gunvaldsen, Rayna AGRI:EX; Boelens, Robert GCPE:EX
Subject: Advanced Notice - Mink on second farm test positive for COVID-19 virus

His.79

We have some unfortunate news to share with you today regarding confirmation of a 2nd mink farm in the lower mainland testing positive for Covid-19 in the mink. We will be issuing a news release shortly (an excerpt included below) regarding these test results so we wanted share this information with you and your members in advance.

Mink on second farm test positive for COVID-19 virus

VICTORIA– Three mink that died on a second Fraser Valley mink farm have tested positive for SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19 in humans.

The Chief Veterinarian for B.C. has placed the farm under a quarantine order prohibiting the movement of animals and materials from the property to minimize the risk of the virus spreading. A plan is in place to provide feed and care to the mink during the outbreak that respects the conditions of the quarantine and maintains both worker and mink safety. No workers on the farm have tested positive for COVID-19 to date.

The three mink were tested after some animals in the herd experienced diarrhoea which can be a sign of COVID-19 in mink. A total of 23 animals died on the farm between December 19-23. The farm has approximately 1,000 animals. It is not currently known how the mink contracted the virus.

Please contact me if you have any additional questions at this time or if there is any further assistance the ministry can provide at this time.

Thank you,

Graham Knox
Director, Climate Action and Emergency Management
Innovation and Adaptation Services Branch
BC Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries
Phone: 778-698-4949
Cell: 250-886-4761
[AGRI Emergency Management](#)

Knox, Graham G AFF:EX

From: Knox, Graham G AGRI:EX
Sent: December 16, 2020 6:46 PM
To: s.79 Viney, Ursula E AGRI:EX; Hughes, Marie Julie AGRI:EX
Cc: Gunvaldsen, Rayna AGRI:EX; Botkin, Clayton AGRI:EX
Subject: RE: Today's talk.

Hjs.79

Thank you again for your time today to meet and discuss the incident and issues of concern for you and the members of the BC Mink Producers Association! We will provide the information you have shared below to our Operations and Planning Sections staff so they are fully aware of these critical time periods and associated requirements. We appreciate your input and look forward to continuing to work collaboratively with you and your members to resolve the current situation in the best way possible.

As stated please reach out any time to Julie, Ursula or myself.

Thank you,

Graham Knox
Incident Commander
Director, Climate Action and Emergency Management
Innovation and Adaptation Services Branch
BC Ministry of Agriculture
Phone: 778-698-4949
Cell: 250-886-4761
[AGRI Emergency Management](#)

-----Original Message-----

From:s.79
Sent: December 16, 2020 6:19 PM
To: Knox, Graham G AGRI:EX <Graham.Knox@gov.bc.ca>; Viney, Ursula E AGRI:EX <Ursula.Viney@gov.bc.ca>; Hughes, Marie Julie AGRI:EX <MarieJulie.Hughes@gov.bc.ca>
Subject: Today's talk.

[EXTERNAL] This email came from an external source. Only open attachments or links that you are expecting from a known sender.

I have let all the producers know about this task force the Ministry has setup for us. It was well welcomed. They all know Julie - and now know - if they need any support, or have any questions to contact her.

I wanted to briefly touch on one of the topics from today...

I was thinking about breeding season and whelping time. At the minimum, mink ranches would need 1 employee per 1000 breeding females (10,000 breeding females = 10 employees). This would be very rough for the farmer, but just possible enough to manage. At those seasons we are swamped! We would normally have 1.5 employees per 1000. More if we can find them.

If for whatever reason we cannot have the one man per 1000, we would not be able to operate. Any more than two days with no staff during breeding season, it very likely could devastate production. The heat cycles are very complex.

Baby time speaks for itself. We need to be there.

I understand this is not a “now” problem and we have more hurdles to get through first. But, in your meetings, we should have these problems in the back of our heads.

These seasons cannot be pushed around. Some of the most important welfare concerns the mink need annually, are when the moms are weaning and the kits are growing. They need very close attention and diet adjustments weekly. Or, there is a very serious problem, very fast.

I appreciate the ministry for getting this setup so we can communicate more clearly to each other. For now, let’s hope all these tests on our staff come back good so we can focus on more important matters.

s.22

Thank you.

s.79

President, BCMPPA
Management,s.79

Knox, Graham G AFF:EX

From: Knox, Graham G AGRI:EX
Sent: December 16, 2020 9:04 AM
To: s.79
Subject: RE: Accepted: Covid-19 Lower Mainland Mink Farm - Information for the BC Mink Producers Association

Hi s.79

Here are the meeting details again...

Join Skype Meeting

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Local - Vancouver: +1 (604) 398-9304, s.15	(BC, Canada)	English (United States)
Toll-Free: +1 (888) 952-9304, s.15	BC, Canada)	English (United States)
Local - Kamloops: +1 (250) 554-7244, s.15	BC, Canada)	English (United States)
Local - Prince George: +1 (250) 645-9304, s.15	(BC, Canada)	English (United States)
Local - Nelson: +1 (778) 671-9304, s.15	(BC, Canada)	English (United States)

Thanks,

Graham Knox
AGRI Incident Commander
Director, Climate Action and Emergency Management
Innovation and Adaptation Services Branch
BC Ministry of Agriculture
Phone: 778-698-4949
Cell: 250-886-4761
[AGRI Emergency Management](#)

-----Original Message-----

From: s.79
Sent: December 16, 2020 8:56 AM
To: Knox, Graham G AGRI:EX <Graham.Knox@gov.bc.ca>
Subject: Re: Accepted: Covid-19 Lower Mainland Mink Farm - Information for the BC Mink Producers Association

[EXTERNAL] This email came from an external source. Only open attachments or links that you are expecting from a known sender.

Thanks for accommodating.

Can you send me login details again pls.

When I accept calendar invitations, I lose the login details due to a glitch.

Thank you

s.79

> On Dec 16, 2020, at 08:53,^{s.79}

>

>

wrote: