



PERSONNEL TRAINING TO RECOGNIZE NORMAL AND ABNORMAL BEHAVIOR AND TREAT ILLNESS AND INJURY

All the personnel involved with working with-in the mink yard should have a general knowledge of mink health and wellbeing. If they observe a mink that is not conforming to normal appearances, the cage should be marked so corrective action can be taken or the appropriate people can be notified. Specific personnel that are directly involved with the mink on a daily basis need to be instructed on normal mink behavior and the signs that a mink is not in a normal state of health.

For the personnel directly involved with the mink, these instructions should first include a discussion on what is normal behavior, activity and appearance of a mink for each specific time of year and examples should be given by video and/or cage side example.

Examples descriptions for normal mink are:

1. Alert and active; this can be influenced by ambient temperature and feeding schedule.
2. Attentive and inquisitive when approached
3. Move freely without restraint
4. They are consuming feed on a daily basis and in the same relationship as their neighbors
5. They are usually not vocalizing
6. They are in appropriate body condition for the time of year
7. The manure is consistent in form and color in relationship neighboring mink

The specific personnel should then be instructed on the signs of illness with any of the following: verbal explanation, pictures, videos or direct cage side examples.

An abnormal mink, whose cages should be mark for further attention, may show clinical signs of illness by :

- Off feed, not consuming the appropriate amounts of feed daily
- Depression/inactivity
- Diarrhea, runny and/or off colored manure
- Coughing, sneezing, panting
- Discharge from eyes or mouth(except right after bedding)
- Swelling with or without drainage
- Bloody vaginal discharge
- Vomiting
- Seizures



- Lameness
- Weight loss (compared to their neighbors)
- Skin lesions, crusty and scaly areas
- Injuries; bite wounds, chewing wounds, lacerations
- Sustained vocalization

For any mink that is deemed to be abnormal, a system should be in place to “mark” that mink’s cage and/or record the cage number so a designated person can come back and evaluate the mink and treat if necessary.

Specific treatment protocols should be written and in place for the personnel to follow for specific illnesses or injuries. These treatments should include the medications to be used, the amount to be used, the time frame to use the medication and the time frame for the expected outcome. These treatment protocols should be discussed and developed in consultation with the farm’s veterinarian.

An example would be:

Clinical signs: Off feed, coughing, depression, discharge from nose in only a few mink in each shed

Diagnosis: Pneumonia, individual animal problem

Treatment: #1 for Pneumonia;

- Specific antibiotic to be used
- Amount to be used for type of mink (male, female, kit, adult)
- How many times per day the treatment should be given
- Time frame to treat the animal (how many days)
- Expected results or response to be seen after treatment is completed; if results are not seen, how to proceed. Try different treatment protocol (ex. treatment #2) or euthanize.

Post mortem examinations should be performed on a routine basis, by either experienced farm personnel or the farm veterinarian.