



About Mink Farming

Best Management Practices

Accommodation:

A mink farm's location should be carefully selected. Due consideration should be given to local environmental conditions, foreseeable neighbourhood development and subsequent anticipated farm growth. Slightly sloping land with good drainage and no risk of flooding forms the ideal site for a mink farm. A supply of fresh, clean water is necessary to supply the watering systems and to provide for daily clean-up in the feed preparation areas. The site of a mink farm should be chosen with regard to availability of and convenience to sources of feed supplies. It is advisable to construct a protective fence around the perimeter of the area where the mink are housed.

Sheds:

In most parts of Canada, mink require protection from environmental extremes throughout the year. Sheds usually serve that purpose. Any building erected to offer that protection should be designed to provide clean, airy and sanitary conditions. Mink sheds are normally open sided. Where extreme conditions are encountered, such as strong winds, severe cold, drifting snow or driving rain, partial or total enclosure of sheds should be considered. However, mink should be kept in enclosed buildings only if the environmental conditions interfere with the natural needs of the mink, including the reproductive and furring cycles. All equipment and services should be inspected regularly and kept in good working order.

Pens:

Mink pens should provide an area that is large enough for the mink to perform natural movement and should allow for activities such as rest, sleep, defecation and other functions that maintain the comfort of the animal.

Nesters:

A suitable, warm, dry nest that is large enough to house the mink should be attached to or incorporated into every pen. Mink should be provided with clean, dry, appropriate bedding during nesting periods. Breeder nesters should allow enough space and privacy for the mother and her litter. At whelping time, the mother and her newborn kits should not be unduly exposed to public view or disturbance.

Food and Water:

Mink should be fed a complete diet that fulfills the various nutritional needs throughout their life cycle. It is essential that mink farmers have a working knowledge of the nutritional requirements of mink. Mink farmers should seek nutritional advice when required. Feed should be given at least twice daily to growing mink and daily to mature mink.

Watering Systems:

The farmer should ensure that clean, potable water is available ad libitum.

Care and Supervision:

All mink should be inspected at least once each day. The arrangement of mink pens should enable easy inspection of all areas and all housed mink, particularly where one attendant is responsible for a large number of mink.

Health and Disease:

Mink farmers have a responsibility to be aware of the condition of their herd and should be able to recognize the signs of a distressed or sick animal.

Hygiene and Sanitation:

Mink farmers should ensure good hygiene and sanitary measures to avoid conditions that are unpleasant for the animals. Regular removal and disposal of manure and fly control are essential parts of a good farm sanitation program. Pens and nests should be cleaned as required.

Transportation of Live Mink:

The transportation of live mink requires special attention to the design of traveling crates, the care of mink while in transit and the completion of appropriate documentation as required by the transporter or government authority. Traveling crates should be adequately designed for transportation by road, rail and air to allow sufficient space, airflow and comfort for each animal. The design of a traveling crate should take into account the length of time the mink will be in transit. The comfort of the mink should be a priority. The movement of mink in summer is not recommended.