



Finnish Fur Breeders' Association FIFUR

Press Release

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FIFUR has obtained a conditional usage permit for mink vaccine from the Finnish Food Authority

“The Finnish fur industry will be the first operator in EU to vaccinate animals against corona”, says FIFUR’s CEO Marja Tiura

The Finnish Food Authority, under the auspices of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, which supervises veterinary activities in Finland, has granted a conditional usage permit under the Medicines Act for a mink coronavirus vaccine developed in a joint project between FIFUR and a group of researchers at the University of Helsinki.

The name of the vaccine preparation is FurcoVac and it is an experimental vaccine product similar to a prescription medicine that meets the Authority’s requirements and does not have a marketing authorisation. The applicant and recipient of the usage permit is FIFUR, which prepares protective vaccination against pandemic SARS-CoV-2 coronaviruses in the Finnish population of farmed mink.

In late autumn 2020, FIFUR started a coronavirus animal vaccine project with a group of researchers of infectious diseases at the University of Helsinki. The aim of the vaccine project is to prevent the emergence of viruses on Finnish farms and thus to contribute to the health of the population. The project also produces important research data on the effectiveness of coronavirus vaccines and safeguards the health of animals and people caring for animals. The project has been financed by FIFUR.

In FIFUR, the corona preparedness and the vaccine project are led by Research Director **Jussi Peura**.

“The authorisation process and tests, including verifications, have taken time and the vaccine group has worked hard to achieve the production of batches of vaccine products that meet the regulatory requirements. Under the supervision of the Finnish Food Authority, we now have a conditional usage permit to prepare the vaccinations of minks safely in Finland ”, says Jussi Peura.

Fur animals have their own vaccination programme and a coronavirus vaccine can be incorporated into it in the future if, for example, a marketing authorisation is applied for.

The Medicines Act lays down specific provisions on the marketing of medicinal products. FIFUR stresses that a vaccine product that has been granted a conditional usage permit is similar in terms of its composition and manufacturing process to a prescription medicine but does not have a marketing authorisation which have stricter demands. A conditional usage permit, on the other hand, means that conditions have been set for carrying out certain monitoring, for example.

Prevention of corona continues on mink farms

Of fur animals minks and Finnraccoons, as well as cats and white-tailed deers have been found to be susceptible to the Covid-19 virus. Producers have complied with the protection guidelines drawn up together with the Finnish authorities since the spring of 2020. Animal testing under the

decision of the European Commission on mink farms in the EU Member States and in Finland on Finnracon farms will continue until March 2022.

All the results have been negative, i.e. no Covid-19 animal infections have so far been detected on Finnish fur farms.

“We will continue the fight against corona and with the protective measures in cooperation with the authorities. The experimental corona vaccine for mink now licensed is a natural part of these protective measures. The time has been demanding for producers when they have had to isolate themselves and take care of the protective measures for employees. I want to thank the producers for the coronavirus protection”, says Jussi Peura.

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The Finnish Fur Breeders' Association – FIFUR is the parent association of the fur industry and the lobbying and training organization of its members. Professional fur animal husbandry has been practiced in Finland for over a hundred years and the association was founded in 1928. The association's regional associations comprise a total of 632 member companies with around 700 farms for fur animals. The association and the producers own the majority of the Finnish marketing and auction company Saga Furs Plc. Finland's fur industry is a pioneer in certification worldwide. The objective of the voluntary quality system, launched in 2005, is to maintain and improve the welfare of animals reared on Finnish fur farms, the quality of production and the professional skills of fur farmers.