

Mink farming poses low COVID risk: Danish health agency

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A resumption of Denmark's banned mink farming poses little risk of COVID virus variants emerging, the country's public health institute said Tuesday in a report that could lead to the industry's revival.

Denmark was the world's leading exporter of [mink](#) fur until it decided in November 2020 to cull all its 15-17 million minks, after studies suggested that a variant found in some of the animals could jeopardise the effectiveness of future vaccines.

Prior to the cull, Denmark was also the world's second-largest producer of mink fur after China.

The Scandinavian country later banned the breeding of the mammals until the end of 2022, in a blow to the industry.

The Danish public health institute SSI said in its [report](#) the risk was low that mink farming would lead to the emergence of variants of concern.

"Overall, the probability can be characterised as low, and is assumed to be significantly less than the probability that these will arise in a [world population](#) of 7.9 billion people", it said.

The report is expected to play a part in the [government's](#) decision later this year on whether to extend or end the ban.

According to Danish news agency Ritzau, 1,243 mink farmers have applied for state compensation for shutting down their farms.

Meanwhile only 15 have applied for compensation for dormant [farms](#), suggesting that most mink farmers do not plan to resume even if the ban is lifted.

The Danish cull led to a political fiasco, when it quickly emerged—after the cull was already underway—that the government's order had no legal basis, leading to the resignation of the agriculture minister.

An agreement was reached retroactively to make the government's

decision legal, and the nationwide cull continued uninterrupted.

The Danish [prime minister](#) later testified before a special parliamentary commission that she did not know the decision lacked legal basis.

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