

Finland to start giving Covid jab to minks

1 October 2021

Finland will begin vaccinating minks on fur farms against COVID-19 after authorities granted temporary approval for an experimental vaccine, the country's regulator said Friday.

The conditional usage permit "is valid until the end of December, by which time the applicant has to provide further data," said senior inspector Liisa Kaartinen of the Finnish Food Authority, which oversees veterinary activities.

Such conditional permits can be granted during a pandemic when no other [vaccine](#) is available.

Minks are bred for their fur and have been found at particular risk of contracting the novel coronavirus.

"We have prepared about half a million doses now, which should be enough to vaccinate all animals twice," said Jussi Peura, research director at the Finnish Fur Breeders' Association, which developed the vaccine together with researchers from Helsinki University.

Because clinical trials have not yet been carried out, the jab cannot be distributed commercially and must be used in conjunction with strict procedures on Finland's 1,000 [fur farms](#) to monitor and prevent the spread of the virus.

The vaccine approval applies only to Finland, where so far no cases of the novel coronavirus have been identified among minks, and where transmission rates among humans have remained some of the lowest in the European Union.

The breeders' association believes its vaccine is the first to receive such approval in the EU.

Neighbouring Russia said in March it had registered what it called the world's first animal vaccine against COVID-19, previously tested on dogs, cats, mink and foxes.

The mink is the only animal identified so far as being able to transmit COVID-19 to humans.

Denmark, previously Europe's largest exporter of mink pelts, saw its fur industry ravaged after a mutated strain of the virus spread through [mink](#) farms last November. All the country's some 15 million minks were subsequently culled.

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APA citation: Finland to start giving Covid jab to minks (2021, October 1) retrieved 25 January 2022 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2021-10-finland-covid-jab-minks.html>

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