NEWS RELEASE
STATE EMERGENCY OPERATIONS CENTER

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
No. 365 – Oct. 9, 2020

Media contact:
mda-info@michigan.gov
800-292-3939

Mink Farm Tests Positive with SARS-CoV-2

LANSING, MICH. The Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD) confirmed the recent discovery of SARS-CoV-2 (the virus that causes COVID-19 in humans) in mink at a Michigan farm. While this finding is not the first case of the virus being identified in mink in the United States, it is the first instance of the virus being confirmed among Michigan's farmed mink population.

After several mink exhibited signs of illness and died on the farm, the owner submitted samples for diagnosis. The Michigan State University Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory completed necropsies on two of the affected animals, which tested presumptive positive for SARS-CoV-2. The samples were then sent to the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) National Veterinary Services Laboratories for confirmatory testing.

Investigations into how the mink contracted the virus are ongoing, but there is currently no evidence that animals, including mink, play a significant role in spreading the virus to humans in Michigan. The Michigan farm is self-contained, has few staff, and prohibits domestic animals from being onsite, so the likelihood of the virus moving to wildlife, pets, or people is quite low. MDARD is working in cooperation with other local, state, and federal agencies on this response.

On August 17, 2020, the USDA announced the first confirmed cases of SARS-CoV-2 in mink at farms in Utah. There has also been a confirmed case in Wisconsin. Worldwide, it has been known that mink are susceptible to SARS-CoV-2 since the virus was discovered in mink on farms in the Netherlands, Denmark, and Spain. After monitoring the outbreaks abroad, USDA, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and state animal health and public health partners issued guidance for those who farm mink in the United States.

For more information about COVID-19 and animals, please visit the CDC's COVID-19 and Animals webpage.

Information around this outbreak is changing rapidly. The latest information is available at Michigan.gov/Coronavirus and CDC.gov/Coronavirus.

###