

***Ad libitum* feeding of lactating mink or access to additional water for kits did not improve welfare**

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The aim of the study was to evaluate the effect of (1) *ad libitum* feeding of female mink from the first day of lactation and (2) additional water nipples for mink kits at the nest box opening, on two animal based welfare indicators and potential changes in the WelFur score at farm level. The indicators were measured according to the WelFur-Mink protocol. We hypothesized that (1) *ad libitum* feeding from the first day of lactation will reduce the prevalence of very thin females by the end of lactation, and that (2) an additional water nipple for mink kits positioned at the nest box opening will decrease the prevalence of kits with injuries by the end of the nursing period. Three private farms with 1,387 dams with kits were included in the study. Of these 917 (316, 307, 294: farm 1, 2 and 3) dams were fed *ad libitum*, and 698 cages with 4,175 kits (1,437, 1,344, 1,394: farm 1, 2 and 3) had access to additional water. 'Injuries' and 'Lean animals' were measured around seven weeks of lactation. The prevalence of cages with injuries and lean animals were analysed with logistic binomial models, taking farm, kits at seven weeks and dams' age into account. No significant effects of *ad libitum* feeding of lactating females on the prevalence of lean animals, or on additional water nipples for mink kits on the prevalence of injuries were found when looking at all the farms. Cages without *ad libitum* feeding had significantly lower prevalence of injuries ($P < 0.05$). One farm had significantly lower prevalence of lean animals in cages with *ad libitum* feeding ($P < 0.001$). Individual feed allowances per litter per day have been collected in order to analyse the effects in more detail, including simulated WelFur scores at farm level.