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October 14, 2020

Amanda Price, Records Officer
Utah Department of Agriculture and Food
350 North Redwood Road
PO Box 146500
Salt Lake City, UT 84114-6500

Sent via e-mail: udaf-commissioner@utah.gov, kwpehrson@utah.gov, agriculture@utah.gov, amandaprice@utah.gov

Dear Amanda Price:

On behalf of Utah Animal Rights Coalition (UARCO), a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, I write pursuant to the Government Records and Management Act (GRAMA), Utah Code Ann. §63G-2-101 to -901 to request records related to cases of SARS-CoV-2 in mink.

According to press accounts, at least nine farms in three counties in Utah have had COVID-19 outbreaks among their mink.¹ Thousands of mink have reportedly died from the disease. It remains unclear what, if any, requirements state authorities have implemented on these operations in response to the growing number of farms with outbreaks.

UARCO requests the following records:

- **Records identifying any and all Utah mink farms which have had positively identified cases of SARS-CoV-2 and/or COVID-19, including (but not limited to) those nine farms referenced in public media reports.**
- **Necropsy reports and diagnostic test reports for any mink from the two Utah mink farms which later had confirmed positive cases of SARS-CoV-2 (March 1, 2020 – present).**
- **Correspondence between Utah Department of Agriculture and Food (UDAF) representatives and representatives of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) regarding SARS-CoV-2 cases in mink, or efforts to identify such cases (March 1, 2020 – present).**

¹ Associated Press. Thousands of mink dead in COVID-19 outbreak on Utah farms. 6 Oct 2020. Available at <https://kutv.com/news/local/thousands-of-minks-dead-in-covid-19-outbreak-on-utah-farms>.

- **Correspondence between Utah Department of Agriculture and Food (UDAF) representatives and representatives of the Utah Department of Health (UDOH) or any county or district health department located in the state of Utah regarding SARS-CoV-2 cases in mink, or efforts to identify such cases (March 1, 2020 – present).**
- **Correspondence between any UDAF representatives and any representatives of the mink farming industry, including the Utah Farm Bureau, Fur Commission USA, and/or representatives of Utah fur farms, regarding the COVID-19 epidemic and its impact on Utah’s fur farming industry (March 1, 2020 – present).**
- **Any protocols or documents reflecting precautions being taken or recommended be taken for Utah mink farms to reduce transmission of SARS-CoV-2 (March 1, 2020 – present).**
- **Records revealing the nature of the “stringent biosecurity measures” implemented on fur farms in response to the latest COVID-19 outbreaks, as indicated by a UDAF spokesperson in recent public media reports.²**

If you are not the custodian of these records, or if these records are not maintained by your organization, I respectfully request that you refer me to the proper custodian or entity, if known.

As you may be aware, animal welfare and ongoing COVID-19 pandemic are matters of significant and growing public concern. The recent positive cases of SARS-CoV-2 on mink farms in Utah has already garnered substantial media coverage in both the local and national press. Growing evidence of bidirectional transmission of COVID-19 to and from mink and humans is a matter of significant public concern.

Issues relating to COVID-19 are of significant concern to the local media and public. The information UARC sought will shine a light on the conduct of state officials in responding to COVID-19 outbreaks in our state, promoting transparency and preserving accountability.

UARC, a non-profit organization, has no private or commercial interest in these records and intends to use these records to enhance public understanding of this important issue and to disseminate information to the news media and the public at large. UARC therefore believes that the release of these records “primarily benefits the public rather than a person” and accordingly requests a waiver of fees. *See* Utah Code Ann. §63G-2-203(4)(a).

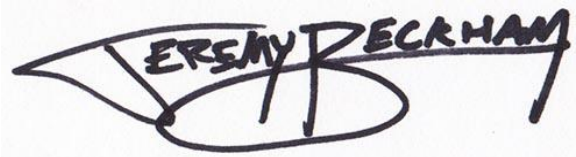
² See, for instance: <https://www.foxbusiness.com/lifestyle/coronavirus-outbreaks-on-utah-farms-leave-10000-minks-dead>

If you choose to deny this request for a fee waiver, please inform me of estimated costs prior to processing this request so that UARC may decide whether to proceed or examine our options for appeal. If you deny this request, in whole or in part, please provide a notice of denial. *See* Utah Code Ann. §63G-2-205.

In light of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, I prefer to receive electronic copies of the requested records, if possible, which can be emailed to me at jeremy@uarc.io. I look forward to receiving your response, to be sent no later than 10 business following your receipt of this request. *See* Utah Code Ann. §63G-2-204(3)(b).

If I may be of assistance, please reach out using the contact information provided below. Email is preferred.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "JEREMY BECKHAM". The signature is stylized, with the first letters of each name being larger and more prominent. The signature is written over a light gray background.

Jeremy Beckham, MPA, MPH
Executive Director
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