



# Mink Inquiry Overview

Below you will find links to an overview video, PowerPoint presentation, survey information sheet, and practice interviews for NASS's Mink Inquiry. The practice interviews can be used to enter data in CATI or CAPI to get familiar with those data collection instruments.

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Strategic Planning and Business Services Division  
Strategic Planning Branch  
Workforce Performance and Staff Development Section

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# NASS Survey Training

## Mink Survey



**United States Department of Agriculture  
National Agricultural Statistics Service**

Workforce Performance and Staff Development Section



# Mink Survey Overview

- Collecting information on previous year pelts and current year live mink production
- Survey is the *only* source of industry information
- **All respondent data is confidential AND cannot be released to the public**

# Survey Details

- Project Code: **197-Mink Survey**
- Questionnaires:
  - Mail out around the 20<sup>th</sup> of April
- Release:
  - *Mink*
  - Typically, around July 12<sup>th</sup> - 15<sup>th</sup> at 3PM (EST)



NASS website: [www.nass.usda.gov/](http://www.nass.usda.gov/)

# Mink Production (2023)

Listed for reference

- Produced 973,510 pelts (down 28% from 2022)
  - WI largest producer
- Average value of \$34.00/pelt
- Pelts classified by color:
  - Black (57%), White (20%), Mahogany (8%), Sapphire (6%)
- 216,470 breeding females for 2024 (down 14% from 2023)
  - Babies are called “kits”



# Survey Questions

- Screening question:
  - During (previous year) did this operation own or raise mink?
    - **Yes:** Continue with survey
    - **No:** “Do you plan to own or raise mink in the future?”
      - **Yes/No/Don’t Know:** “Has the operation been sold?”
        - » **Yes:** Record new operator’s information
        - » **No:** Please list the name and address of any person or farm in your area that started raising mink in (previous year) or (current year)

# Pelts and Breeding by Color Class

- How many (**previous year**) pelts in each color class:
  - Black, Demi/Wild, Pastel, Sapphire, Blue Iris, Mahogany, Pearl, Lavender, Violet, White, Palomino, Other
- How many females bred (and to be bred) to produce (**current year**) kits in each color class:
  - Black, Demi/Wild, Pastel, Sapphire, Blue Iris, Mahogany, Pearl, Lavender, Violet, White, Palomino, Other





## Mink Production Timeline:

JAN.	FEB.	MAR.	APR.
	BREEDING		
			WHELPING
MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUG.
		WEANING & SEPARATING	
WHELPING			GROWTH & FURRING
SEPT.	OCT.	NOV.	DEC.
		GRADING	
GROWTH & FURRING			PELTING

# Pelt Value

- For the previous year, what was the Total Value of Sales for the pelts OR Average Price per pelt?
  - Remember, The 2022 average was \$34.00.
    - Leave notes if operator reports an amount well above or below this

# Watch for:

- Previous year total pelts compared to current year females bred
  - Average litter size is 4-6 kits per female
  - Does this relationship seem reasonable?
    - Leave notes for any large differences
- Large changes in pelts/females bred by color class
  - Current pelts and females
  - AND any previous data
- Sum of pelts and females by color class do not equal total

# Reluctant Response

“It’s none of the government’s business about my mink production/this information will be used against me.”

- You’re right to be concerned about your privacy. That’s why facts about your operation are strictly confidential and are used only in combination with similar reports from other producers like yourself. No one outside of this office has access to the individual reports, and information is never shared with other agencies.

# In conclusion:

- Very important source of data for the fur industry
  - Which strongly supports *your* efforts  
(Example: Fur Commission USA)
- Watch out for the different color classes
  - Subclasses, trade/alternative names, etc. can be tricky
  - Work with the respondent, leave notes
- May be hesitant to discuss production
  - Stress confidentiality, statistical purposes only, you are who you say you are, etc
- Work through some practices on your iPad

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## Mink Survey Information Sheet

The purpose of the survey is to determine the number of pelts produced for the previous season and the number of females bred for the current season by commercial class.

Mink have short legs, webbed toes and a long skinny body that enable it to be an excellent swimmer. Adult males typically weight between 1 and 3 pounds and are anywhere from 19 to 28 inches in length. The adult female is smaller and typically weigh 1 to 2 pounds and are anywhere from 18 to 23 inches in length. Females have kits (babies) in litters typically averaging 4-6 kits per litter once per year in the April/May time frame.

### Looking at:

- Raise or own any mink or have intentions to raise or own mink in the future.
- Pelts produced by color class for previous year
- Females Bred to Produce Kits by color class current year

## Things to Watch Out For:

- High or low number of pelts compared to previous year
- High or low number of females bred compared to previous year
- High or low of previous year pelts compared current year females bred
- Large changes in pelts and females bred by color class
- Sum of pelts and females by color class do not equal total

## Color Class & Trade Names

- Black – Standard, Pure Dark
- Demi/Wild – Dark Brown, Ranch Wild, Demi-buff
- Pastel – Dawn, Orchid
- Sapphire
- Blue Iris – Aleutian, Gunmetal
- Mahogany
- Pearl
- Lavender – Lavender-Hope
- Violet – Cameo, Winterblue, Glacial
- White
- Palomino
- Other



# Mink Survey Practice Interviews

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## Practice Interview 1:

Who is responding? **Operator**

Let me verify the name, address, and phone number that I have for this operation. Is this information correct? **Yes**

Were mink owned or raised at any time during (previous year) or bred to produce kits in (current year) on this operation? **Yes**

What was the total number of pelts taken from the (previous year) crop for marketing?  
**4,000**

When considering the 4000 pelts taken from the (previous year) crop for marketing what color classes of mink were involved? **Black, Blue Iris, and Pearl**

Of the 4000 pelts taken, how many were in the Black color class? **3,000**

Of the 4000 pelts taken, how many were in the Blue Iris color class? **500**

Of the 4000 pelts taken, how many were in the Pearl color class? **500**



What is the total number of females bred and to be bred produce kits in (current year)? **950**

When considering the 950 females bred and to be bred to produce kits in (current year), what color classes of ink were involved? **Black, Blue Iris, and Pearl**

Of the 950 females bred, how many were in the Black color class? **900**

Of the 950 females bred, how many were in the Blue Iris color class? **25**

Of the 950 females bred, how many were in the Pearl color class? **25**

For the (previous year) crop sold, what was the Total Value of Sales for the pelts OR the Average Price per pelt? **\$40.60 per pelt**

Do you know of any persons or farms in your area that started raising mink in (previous year) or (current year)? **No**

Do you make any day-to-day decisions for another mink farm or ranch? **No**

Would you rather have a brief summary emailed to you at a later date? **No**



## Practice Interview 2:

Who is responding? **Spouse, Missy Farmer**

Let me verify the name, address, and phone number that I have for this operation. Is this information correct? **Yes**

Were any mink owned or raised at any time during (previous year) or bred to produce kits in (current year) on this operation? **No**

Does this operation plan to own or raise mink in the future? **No**

Has this operation been sold, rented, or turned over to someone else? **No**

Will the land be used for any agricultural purposes in the next year? **Yes, I have cattle and cut hay**

Do you make any day-to-day decisions for another mink farm or ranch? **No**

Would you rather have a brief summary emailed to you at a later date? **No**



### **Practice Interview 3:**

Who is responding? **Operator**

Let me verify the name, address, and phone number that I have for this operation. Is this information correct? **Yes**

Were mink owned or raised at any time during (previous year) or bred to produce kits in (current year) on this operation? **Yes**

What was the total number of pelts taken from the (previous year) crop for marketing? **2,000**

When considering the 2000 pelts taken from the (previous year) crop for marketing what color classes or mink were involved? **Palomino**

Of the 2000 pelts taken, how many were in the Palomino color class? **2,000**

What was the total number of females bred and to be bred to produce kits in (current year)? **500**

When considering the 500 females bred and to be bred to produce kits in (current year), what color classes of mink were involved? **Pastel and Palomino**



Of the 500 females bred, how many were in the Pastel color class? **400**

Of the 500 females bred, how many were in the Palomino color class? **100**

For the (previous year) crop sold, what was the Total Value of Sales for the pelts OR the Average Price per pelt? **I got a total of \$68,000**

Do you know of any persons or farms in your area that started raising mink in (previous year) or (current year)? **Yes**

What is the name of the new operation? **Warner Ranch**

What is the name, address, and phone number of the new operator?

**Michael Warner**

**1879 FM 89**

**Paris, ID 12345**

**555-987-1234 cell**

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Do you make any day-to-day decisions for another mink farm or ranch? **No**

Would you rather have a brief summary emailed to you at a later date? **No**

