

**Legge's Mink Farm in Pynn's Brook**  
Registration Pursuant to Section 49 of  
The Environmental Protection Act

Name of Undertaking: Legge's Mink Farm

Proponent:

(I) Name of Corporate Body: Legge's Mink Farm

(ii) Address:  
TCH Pynn's Brook  
P.O. Box 219  
Pasadena, Newfoundland  
A0L 1K0

(iii) Chief Executive Officer:  
Mr. Jason Legge  
TCH Pynn's Brook  
P.O. Box 219  
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(iv) Principal Contact: Same As Above

### **The Undertaking:**

The scope of this report includes proposed construction/renovation and operation of infrastructure for a mink farm in the Pynn's Brook area of Newfoundland. Farm renovation is proposed to commence this fall (2005) and all phases to be complete by early spring of 2006.

The goal of Legge's Mink Farm (to be incorporated) is to introduce a number of animals to the site in the spring of 2006 (1000 bred females), and to increase to 1500 female breeders within 3 years, producing 6750+ pelts annually, with possible expansion.

Farm construction/renovation with respect to timing, layout and size are based on achieving our goal and ensuring adherence to the "Environmental Farm Practices Guidelines for Livestock Producers in Newfoundland and Labrador" (November 2001). This proposal is designed to make Legge's Mink Farm competitive in the international fur industry. Given the rapid growth of this industry, strong markets and positive future outlooks, this is an opportune time for entry into the fur industry.

The proponent is myself, Jason Legge. I am 41 years old and I have worked on farms, both dairy and broiler, my entire life. My father, John, was both a dairy and broiler farmer. I purchased a broiler operation and managed two broiler quotas for over 15 years; my farm was one of the largest chicken farms in Newfoundland during that time.

During the past six months, I have thoroughly researched the fur industry and its

viability. On my days off, I have chosen to work on a local mink farm simply to gain experience. During this time, I have experienced grading for pelt color, quality and size before marketing in November. After this, I was shown the procedure of testicular sizing. Additionally, I was exposed to feed mixing, feeding and operation of feed cart. I was shown and assisted in bedding and cleaning of cages, general maintenance of cages and equipment, and animal handling. As well, I helped with herd health to include administering ointments and injections. The most important herd health concern would be Aleutian Disease. I also spent an entire day assisting in the annual blood testing of several hundred female animals. Because of this experience, I am quite comfortable in the care and handling of these animals i.e. clipping of the toe nails for blood sampling via capillary tubes. I have experienced the very important aspect of detailed record keeping for the purpose of breeding and the task of breeding itself. From this experience, I have gained much knowledge. Whelping was another period during which much information was gathered in husbandry. This exposure to mink farming has proven to be an excellent training tool for me and has proven to me that I am ready and able to take on the operation and management of his own farm.

## **Description of the Undertaking**

### **Geographical Location**

Legge's farm is located between the town boundaries of Pynn's Brook and Pasadena, just off the Trans Canada Highway, in the Humber Valley adjacent to the Department of Natural Resources. All land and buildings are accessible by an established gravel road.

In terms of land base, I already own 12 acres of cleared land. I have one 50 acre lease plus an additional 50 acres in reserve. Approximately 15 acres of the additional 120 acres are cleared and will be available for forage production. Such forage production has a dual benefit: hay can be harvested for lining nest boxes and the remaining hay can be sold to local farmers

As previously mentioned, I either own or have access to four parcels of land in the Pynn's Brook area approximately 6 kilometres north-east of the Community of Pasadena. These parcels of land are bounded by Crown land to the North, the Western Regional Agriculture office to the South, the former Canadian National Railway to the West, and the Trans Canada Highway to the East. Please refer to the topographic map attached. The farm is a former broiler chicken operation and has all the infrastructure of the operation still intact.

#### 1. A brief description of the four parcels of land is as follows:

Parcel 1 is a deed containing approximately 12 acres ( 4.86 hectares) of which approximately 6 acres ( 3.43 hectares) was cleared for the broiler operation. All of the barn structures are located on this parcel of land.

Parcel 2 is a deed containing approximately 5 acres ( 2.02 hectares) of which 1.5 - 2.0 is cleared. This parcel contains the farm residence which is a two storey home

of 3300 square feet with a completed full basement and attached garage.

Parcel 3 is an agricultural lease containing 49 acres ( 20 hectares) of which approximately 7.5 acres is seeded to perennial forages. Most of the remainder of this parcel has had the trees removed and is ready for land clearing.

Parcel 4 is a reserve of land for approximately 50 acres ( 20 hectares). This reserve is held specifically for the existing farm.

*Please refer to the attached copies of aerial photographs for the location of the various parcels of land described thus far.*

Because I owned and operated a large scale broiler operation, I already have buildings that could be easily converted into a mink operation. The three former chicken barns have 50,000 square feet of floor space. A water supply is already established.

The following is the dimensions of the various existing buildings:

- 1) 340 feet by 40 feet (2 storey)
- 2) 240 feet by 40 feet ( 2 storey)
- 3) 100 feet by 40 feet ( 2 storey)
- 4) 60 feet by 30 feet ( 2 storey)

### Farm Layout

The farm lay-out consists of four buildings, with a combined floor space of 50,000 square feet. The existing farm layout can potentially house 3,000 breeders. For this farm plan, I will use one larger building in which the female breeding stock, male breeding stock, and all kits will be housed. This unit should be adequate for the 1500 breeders. Additional units will be renovated or constructed if required.

### Mink Production Facility

Renovations will commence immediately pending the approval of necessary funding, tentatively in the fall.

Although mink are commonly housed in open-sided sheds, due to the Newfoundland climate and weather conditions, it is necessary that sheds are constructed in such a manner that they are well ventilated in the warmer season, but are completely enclosed and draft free in the colder months.

Barn renovations will commence with the addition of translucent fiberglass panels in the roof to allow additional light access. Approximately 3 feet of metal siding on the top portion of the exterior walls must be removed and replaced with fiberglass or fabrene. Such light is required for the mink to progress through critical hormonal changes. Artificial lighting in the shed will also be required.

Fiberglass panels or fabrene will be removed from the walls to allow for additional ventilation in the summertime. Mesh screens will be attached behind removable sections to prevent insect/animal entry. This will allow constant air flow during hot periods. Additionally, turbine vents will be installed in the roof. Such measures are necessary as mink are extremely susceptible to intense heat. It is important that the animals are kept in a dry, draft-free environment. Thus, snow and wind must be kept out. As such, the fiberglass or fabrene panels will be re-inserted for the winter months.. The kits will be born in April/ May when the temperature is still quite cold, so extra bedding will be provided to build warm nests.

After all structural changes are complete, cages and watering system will be assembled and installed. During the colder months, the building will be tightly secured. Building renovations and set up will be accomplished in early March.

### Introduction of Animals

It is absolutely crucial that only the best breeding stock is purchased. This is the basis for the entire operation - and the determining factor for its future. I will purchase breeders from top quality mink farms, with whom I have already had discussions. The first purchase will be made in the spring of 2006. At that time, 1000 bred females will be introduced to the farm, with an average kit litter of 4.5 per female. After first whelp, the farm will be housing approximately 4500 animals. The initial purchase must involve a commitment from the seller to provide quality AD-free breeding stock. I currently have a tentative arrangement to purchase 1000 bred females from a Newfoundland based Danish mink farmer.

The following demonstrates a full cycle on my mink farm:

April 01,2006 introduction of 1000 bred females > By 10 wks, all whelping will be completed (~ early May) > Kits are weaned at 6-8 wks (~early July) and placed in pelter cages > Mid-July to November is the growth period. During this time, molting occurs before winter fur grows in> After this, grading begins for size, color and quality> Also, at this time, males and females are selected for replacement> selected pelters are euthanized in late November/early December> Animals are frozen and transported to a pelting service. >

> During the first months of the new year, females and males are conditioned for the upcoming breeding season. With only the female breeders and males remaining, this is the opportune time for general maintenance of buildings, equipment, etc. > Early in March 2007, the cycle continues again with the breeding being done on farm starting from March 01-03 and continuing for 21 consecutive days.

### Feed Kitchen

A facility for feed preparation and storage will also be needed, having an

approximate capacity of 40,000-50,000 lbs. Two 5hp refrigeration units will be installed. A feed grinder and mixer will also be purchased.

### Feed Source

At present, there is a central feed kitchen located in central Newfoundland and feed will be sourced from there. There are plans currently being made for the construction of two additional feed kitchens in the province.

Water supply to the existing farm is already established. Drinking water will be supplied to the mink through water nipples, attached to piping containing water constantly circulating under pressure. A heated wire within the piping prevents the water from freezing during the winter months.

### Waste Management

Manure management is not a big concern for this operation because of the existing land base. In spring, summer and fall, this manure will be used as land fertilizer. In the winter season, the collected manure will be stored on a concrete platform, which will prevent leakage and the manure pad will be tarped. The heat created by the addition of a tarp will kill any potential pupa/ larva growth as well as fly control. It should be noted that I have an existing building with a concrete floor which will be quite adequate for manure storage. An external cement pad will be constructed if deemed necessary. Additionally, there are several root crop farmers in the local vicinity who have expressed an interest in obtaining any available manure.

### Odour Control

All efforts will be made to ensure that the ranch is well-drained. This will reduce the odour associated with manure. As well, the manure will be encased in sawdust, which is an effective method of reducing odours. Collected excrement is a mixture of manure and wood shavings. All excrement will be removed from the sheds on a regular basis, ensuring that the odour levels within the sheds are kept low.

It should be noted that this farm is located in an agriculturally zoned area with no residential properties within a 3 mile radius.

### Security Measures

A wire fence will eventually be erected around the perimeter of the site containing the mink sheds. This will prevent mink from escaping, in the event that they break out of their cages. It will also prevent other wild or domestic animals from entering. Furthermore, it will prevent human trespassers. This wire will extend 12" into the ground to prevent animals from digging under. The addition of barbed wire may also be considered to prevent trespassers.

My permanent family residence is on the farm property and as such the farm will be attended at all times.

### Health Protection

All breeding stock purchased must be Aleutian-free certified. If new breeding stock is introduced in the future, they will undergo a period of quarantine. A shed will be constructed for this purpose.

Depending on the mother's history, at either the age of 6-8 weeks, or 11-12 weeks, all kits will be vaccinated against Distemper, ,Viral Enteritis, Botulism, and Pseudomonas.

Agricultural veterinarians are located nearby in Pynn's Brook, and are available when needed.

### Animal Welfare

Animals housed for production will be cared for humanely and in accordance with the *Recommended Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Farm Animals*. Pen size will meet or exceed regulations. Animals will be fed two to five times daily, depending on their age, to meet their nutritional requirements. Animals will be kept disease-free through *High Herd Health Programs* and necessary bio-security programs. All workers will be carefully trained in mink handling and requirements, and stress-reduction.

In addition to the animal welfare issues, it is in the farm's best interest to maintain the mink's quality of life since pelt quality is directly related to animal health and comfort.

### Euthanasia

The term “euthanasia” is derived from the Greek term “eu” meaning “good” and “thanatos” meaning “death”. Thus, a “good death” is one that occurs without pain and distress.

Hypoxia, through exposure to high levels of carbon monoxide is the most commonly used method of euthanizing mink. If the correct levels of carbon monoxide are being used (3.5%), the mink shows decreased signs of consciousness

with ~13 seconds of exposure and death within ~21 seconds. The consistent lack of defecation and urination of mink during this process indicate that it is a rapid, stress-free death.

Pelter mink will be euthanized in November and December via contained exposure to carbon monoxide. At this point, their fur is in prime condition.

Frozen mink carcasses will be transported for pelting to either *Viking Fur Farms* in Trinity Bay, *Charleston Mink Farm* in Clarenville or *Botwood Fur Ranch* in Botwood( all in Newfoundland) or to *340 Rancher's Co-op* in Nova Scotia.

### Human Resources

People of various professions will be contracted in the initial construction/set-up of the operation. I will be the general manager plus one other full time worker; other part time workers will be hired as required. Family members will also work on the farm on both a regular and need-be basis.

### Schedule

Fall 2005	Commencement of Renovation/Construction Phase
March 2006	Completion of Renovations
April 2006	Arrival of Animals

### **Funding**

Legge's Mink Farm has applied for funding assistance through the Agricultural Policy Framework, Atlantic Canada Opportunity Agency (no interest loan), Farm Credit Corporation and Industry Trade Rural Development. Approval of such funding has not yet been granted. The owner will contribute land, existing buildings and equipment.