RANCH MINK
NORTH AMERICAN RANCH MINK

Types

North American Mink are simply unlike any other mink in the world. They generally have more dense, more compact underwool, and range in nap from X-SHORT to LONG.

Sizes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Size</th>
<th>Range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5x0</td>
<td>Over 101 cm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4x0</td>
<td>95 - 101 cm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>000</td>
<td>89 - 95 cm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>00</td>
<td>83 - 89 cm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>77 - 83 cm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>71 - 77 cm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>65 - 71 cm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>59 - 65 cm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>53 - 59 cm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>47 - 53 cm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Under 47 cm</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Common Pelt Colours of Ranch Mink Whole Pelts

- (a) mahogany
- (b) demi buff
- (c) pale pastel
- (d) lavender
- (f) pearl
- (g) white
- (h) black
- (i) blue iris
- (j) sapphire
- (k) violet
Pre-sort is the first step in a long process that will produce large collections of fur which are sold at auction. In order to be as effective and efficient as possible, it is important that all pre-sort technicians strive to work at a pace that promotes high production rate as well as a high quality product.

Pre-sort was created to maximize the time and expertise of veteran technicians by removing all pelts with apparent damage. If done correctly, pre-sort allows for senior technicians to focus on grading the quality of the skin rather than finding imperfections. If done incorrectly, pre-sort has the potential to affect the entire warehouse in a negative way: Slow production impedes the entire warehouse, and inaccurate production delays technicians down the line.

GOALS

• To increase the rate of production
• To produce a consistent product

Presort technicians identify imperfections or defects and categorize the mink according to the type and amount of damage acceptable in each grade. At NAFA mink are pre-sorted into three main sections:

1. Labeled
2. Very Slight Damage (VSL)
3. Section III.

It is important to understand that pre-sort is the first technical process that a mink will go through, meaning that each mink will be handled several more times before it is lotted for auction. Pre-sort is the first line of defense and identifies the obvious imperfections.

Note:

If you notice that a certain imperfection become increasingly common please make sure to inform your supervisor. Your supervisor will then take the required steps to document a common imperfection within a certain group.
PRE-SORT BREAKS

Labeled mink are pelts that do not contain any imperfections. They must be complete, clean skins with no defects. Do not scrutinize every skin; scouring for damage will slow you down. If it is damaged you will notice. Skins with small, shallow surface mats or a light stain on belly can remain in the Labeled goods. It can be no greater that the size of this circle.

Very slight damage (VSL)

Mink that contain slight imperfections which do not exceed 5% of the total skin. When making a decision it is important to consider which types and quantities of damage are acceptable in VSL. Remember that not all damages are the same.

Section III

Any pelts with damages that exceed 10% of the skin’s total area. Included in this section are lowgrades, pieces, cottons, sprinklers and white marks. All taints, excessive holes, pronounced rips and pieces must always go in Section III.

Types of damage

Mats and Stains

Mats

A Mat is clumped, knotted under wool caused by dirt, grease, blood, wet feed, or feces.

There are Two Types of Mats:

· Deep Mat – the mat extends to the skin of the pelt and is very solid

· Surface Mat – the mat is very loose and it does not extend to the actual skin of the pelt.

Stains

Stains are an imperfection of the fur caused by urine, blood, feed, or feces. Breeder stains are the result of old age. The more pronounced the stain, the older the mink. Breeders are a category of mink that are graded separately.

Clips and Chews

Clips

· Surface damage on the pelt where a chunk of guard hair is missing

Chews

· Chews are a deep clip that penetrates into the underfur
SLIPS, CLAMP DAMAGE AND TAINTS

SLIPS
- A spot on a pelt where fur is falling out and exposing the skin, a bald spot
- Damaged caused by handling/processing

CLAMP DAMAGE
- A slip that is caused during the pelt processing procedure
- Located on the skirt or by the tail of the pelt – Will have the appearance of a clip in that area
- Damage caused by handling/processing

TAINTS
- Loss of hair due to environmental factors. Taints can bleed into large bald spots

HOLES, TEARS, AND PIECES

HOLES
- Missing areas of both fur and skin

TEARS
- Tears are rips in the leather of the mink pelt.
- Missing tails are common

PIECES
- Pelts with a mass amount of skin missing

BITES AND BOILS

BITES
- Bumps or scars from insects/bugs
- Considered leather damage

BOILS
- Infections that can fester and become pronounced with scars and/or scabs
DISCOLOURATION

COTTON
· Skins with all underfur a pronounced white due to poor health

SPRINKLER AND COBALTs
· Sprinklers have white guard hairs due to illness
· Cobalts have the appearance of a sprinkler in their underfur

WHITEMARKS
· Discolored patches of hair as the result of genetics causing lack of pigment

LOWGRADES
· A Summer Skin is a mink that has died before coming to prime
· Timing of death will dictate the grade - lowgrades range from II to V
· These skins are very flat
· These skins tend to be very rough in appearance
· The leather of the pelt is blue/black
· Summer skins trump all damages excluding excessive tainting

THE NAPS MADE ARE:

- EXTRA SHORT NAP XSN 1X
- SHORT NAP SN 1
- SHORT-MEDIUM OPEN SMO 2X
- SHORT-MEDIUM NAP SMN 2
- MEDIUM NAP MN 3
- MEDIUM LONG NAP MLN 4
- LONG NAP LN 5
- EXTRA LONG NAP XLN 6
COLOURS AND CLARITY BY MAJOR MINK VARIETY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VARIETY</th>
<th>COLOURS</th>
<th>CLARITIES</th>
<th>GRADE</th>
<th>DESCRIPTION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BLACK MINK</td>
<td>BLK</td>
<td>XXDK</td>
<td>XDK</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>DK</td>
<td>DK-BR</td>
<td>BR</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MAHOGANY</td>
<td>XDK</td>
<td>XDK</td>
<td>MED</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEMI/WILD TYPE</td>
<td>XDK</td>
<td>DK</td>
<td>XPL</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PASTEL</td>
<td>XDK</td>
<td>DK</td>
<td>XPL</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAPPHIRE</td>
<td>XDK</td>
<td>DK</td>
<td>XPL</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BLUE IRIS</td>
<td>XDK</td>
<td>DK</td>
<td>XPL</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CLARITIES:

1. Clear, Blue
2. Slight Off
3. Off
4. Red

LABELLED GRADES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GRADE</th>
<th>DEFINITION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NAFA GOLD</td>
<td>Complete, fully prime pelts. Adequate underfur and good, even guard hair coverage. Smooth appearance and silky texture.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NAFA SILVER</td>
<td>Complete, prime pelts. Weaker underfur and poorer or uneven coverage or coarser guard hair.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPRINKLERS (GD)</td>
<td>Numerous white guard hairs all over pelt or concentrated in one area (GLD &amp; SLV quality pelts.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WHITE MARKS (GD)</td>
<td>Large white patches usually in throat area or between legs.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

VSL GRADES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GRADE</th>
<th>DEFINITION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MATTED</td>
<td>Fur stuck together in knots caused by wet feed or feces.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STAINED BELLIES</td>
<td>Heavily discoloured or matted area around crotch and belly area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HIPPER</td>
<td>Obvious discolouration in hip area around crotch and belly area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VERY SLIGHT DAMAGE</td>
<td>Chews or clips (i.e. patches where guard hair is missing). One spot no larger than 2 cm or two spots of total area the size of 2 cm.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>One small hole or cut no larger than 2 cm in the main body of pelt.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A missing tail where it indents into main body of skin.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A scar from a boil or abscess in the main body of pelt.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A torn or missing leg if it does not extend to the back of skin.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VSA</td>
<td>Skins of heavier weight with smooth, even and silky guard hair coverage.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VSB</td>
<td>Skins of lower weight with weaker finish.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
BREEDERS

PRESORT
Breeder pre-sort is based on the back of the pelt. Matting, stains and small damages on the belly are ignored. Similar to the regular goods, breeders are presorted into Labelled, VSL and Section III.

GRADING

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GRADE</th>
<th>DESCRIPTION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BR1</td>
<td>Back is clear of defects and has a slight stain down the belly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BR2</td>
<td>Back is clear of defects and has slight matting and a pronounced stain on the belly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BR3</td>
<td>Back is clear of defects and the entire belly is matted and stained.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BR-VSL</td>
<td>These skins are categorized according to breeder belly stains as detailed above, as well as any defects on the back. Only small damaged up to 10% are permissible in BR-VSL; anything exceeding 10% of the back must be put into Section III.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SECTION III
This is the most complicated grading that we do. It is essentially broken into two categories
1) Damaged, seasonable skins
2) Low grades and pieces
Damages can range in cause and appearance but are evaluated by their severity and size.
Below is a table of commonly encountered types of damage and descriptions of their underlying cause.

DAMAGES AND THEIR CAUSES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DAMAGES</th>
<th>CAUSES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TAINTS</td>
<td>Overheating during the harvesting process; the internal temperature once deceased</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MATS</td>
<td>Wet food, poor bedding conditions, wet environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LEATHER DAMAGE</td>
<td>Scars from fighting or bug bites, boils in the neck or head (abscesses which require draining) or stale/oxidized pelts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CLIPS &amp; CHEWS</td>
<td>Playing, fighting, feeding or breeding process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HOLES, RIPS &amp; TEARS</td>
<td>Pelting process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COTTONS &amp; SPRINKLERS</td>
<td>Indication of a sick mink</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WHITE MARKS</td>
<td>Genetics for hair pigmentation (positive trait in female but not males)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SINGE</td>
<td>Literal burning from a heat source or the result of environmental conditions (very hot and windy)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CLAMP DAMAGE</td>
<td>Hair loss/shedding near the legs or tail due to clamps used during the drying process</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This is a simplified visual representation of the III section grading process.

PRESORT

The SECTION III Grading process starts with a simplified pre-grade break down:

- **II & III**: Clear of defects but under-prime
- **SLT CLIP**: Clip damage 5 - 10%; no other defects allowed
- **SLT DGD**: Damage 5 - 10%; no taints allowed
- **GOOD CLIP DGD**: Clip damage amounting to 10-25%
- **GOOD DGD**: Damages amounting to 10-25%
- **POOR DGD**: Damages amounting to 26-50%
- **VERY POOR DGD**: Damages amounting to over 50%
- **VPC**: Little or no commercial value
- **MATS**: Matting only, no other defects allowed
- **CLEAN CTN & SPR**: Cottons and sprinklers, no other defects allowed
- **DGD CTN & SPR**: Cottons and sprinklers with damages up to 30%
- **SUMMER SKINS**: Under-prime skins with little to no under wool

Once pre-sorted, mink are napped and coloured before grading begins.
NAPPING

Napping is required in some of the grades and will vary in separation according to type.

- **Black Mink**
  - XSN: X-SHORT on its own
  - SMN: SHORT and SHORT
  - MEDIUM together
  - LN: MEDIUM and LONG

- **Mahogany & Demi Mink**
  - SN: X-SHORT and SHORT together
  - SMN: SHORT-MEDIUM on its own
  - LN: MEDIUM-LONG and LONG together

*Note:* Some Mutations will be napped depending on quantity.

COLOURING

Black and Mahogany mink will be coloured in some grades depending on quantity.

- **Black Mink**
  - BLK-XXD: XD-DK

- **Mahogany**
  - XXD-XD: DK-MED

*Note:* Some mutations will be coloured depending on quantity.

GRADING

**SEASONABLE SKINS**

These are all prime skins with varying types and degrees of damage. Low grade skins are not permitted in the following categories.

- **II**
  These skins will not be as good as fully primed skins because they did not reach maturity. The leather should be slightly blue and somewhat board-y. The look of the fur will not be as silky but there are weaker varieties still. This pelt must be clear of defects.

- **COTTONS**

- **CTN**
  Seasonable skins, of good to average quality, that are free of defects. Will have white under wool due to poor health, often an indication of Aleutian disease.

- **CTN 1**
  Seasonable cottons and sprinklers with SLT DGD or DG-1 level defects. Mats and stains are okay to include. If damage exceeds 25% pelt becomes DGD 2-3 or VPC.

- **CTN 2**
  Low grade cottons and sprinklers (II & III), free of defects. Mats & stains may be included. If there are any defects pelt becomes DGD 2-3 or VPC.
MATS

MAT 1  Gold and silver quality skins which are damaged exclusively by matting. Mats cannot be deep hard knots and may amount to no more that 10-25% of the skin. Clip damage not allowed. If mats are deep and hard pelt drops to DG 2.

MAT 2  Gold and silver quality skins with up to 26-70% of skin matted. Mats must be loose and shallow. No clip damage allowed. If mats are deep and hard pelt drops to DG 2 or 3.

DAMAGES

DGD-1  (SLT DGD) Good quality skins 5 - 10% of skin damage. Allowable defects include rips, small holes, and small clips, small sew jobs. No taints, mats or stains allowed. If skin is not seasonable (II or III) drop down to DG2-DG3.

DGD-2  (GOOD DGD) Good to average quality skins, some woolly, with 11 - 25% of skin damaged. Allowable defects include tears, holes, mats, stains, clips, sew jobs and small taints. If skin is not seasonable (II or III) drop down to DG3.

DGD-3  (POOR DGD) 26-50% of skin damaged. Acceptable defects include tears, cuts, holes, clips, deep mats, stains, large sew jobs and taints. If skin is not seasonable (II or III) drop down to DG4.
CLIP DAMAGE

CLIP 1  (SLT DGD) Gold and silver quality skins with 5 - 10% of the skin being damaged by clips. No other defects allowed. Note: Previously lotted with SLT DGD but now separate for shearing.

CLIP 2  (GOOD DGD) Good quality, clean skins with 11 - 25% of skin damaged by clips. No other defects allowed.

CLIP 3  (POOR DGD) Good quality, clean skins with 26 - 50% of skin damaged by clips. No other defects allowed.

CLIP 4  (VERY POOR DGD) Good quality, clean skins with over 50% of skin damaged by clips. No other defects allowed. BACKBELLY Note: if clips are deep enough to expose leather pelt drops down to DGD 1-4.

LOWGRADES AND PIECES

III  The leather on these skins will be darker blue than the II, or black. They will also be weaker and flatter, but there will still be some under wool. The pelt must be clear of defects.

IV  Clean skin, no defects. Small stains or loose mats allowed. Leather is mostly black. Pelt is very flat with very little under wool. If damaged drop down to V.

V  Clean to VLS, some mats and stains allowable. Leather is very black. Pelt is very flat with no under wool and very coarse hair.
DGD-4  (VERY POOR DGD/PIECES) Good to average quality skins, some woolly. More than 50% of skin damaged (back and belly). Defects include holes, rips, tears, stains, mats, big taints, very large sew jobs. Can be considered pieces, but it is still a full length pelt.

VPC  Pelt with no commercial value. Very, very poor damage, damaged IV and V, bad taints, low grade pieces.

HEADS & TAILS  Pieces divided into large and small sizes.