

NEW YORK AUCTION COMPANY, INC.,
New York, N.Y., September 18, 1967.

Hon. E. Y. BERRY,
*House of Representatives,
Washington, D.C.*

DEAR CONGRESSMAN BERRY: As president of one of the largest marketing agents for ranch mink in the United States, I feel obliged to provide you with a summary and an analysis of the effects of mink imports on the crash that has fallen on the U.S. mink ranchers.

I take it for granted that you are aware of the pending bills in Congress, seeking a quota on a number of mink by percentage to be imported into our country. The main reason that the mink ranching industry is seeking this relief is because it is commonly known that mink prices have declined drastically this past year, to such an extent that it is doubtful whether or not more than 50 percent of the industry can survive at the present price levels unless they are given some hope for relief in the near future.

The major factor, in our opinion, for this decline was the continued increase in the mink production abroad. The majority of the countries in Scandinavia and Europe producing mink are minute consumers of their own product, and have to export the bulk of their production in order to remain in business. This places an unfair burden on our American fur farmers, because they have to sell practically all of their pelts in our country in direct competition with other pelts that are flowing into this country at alarming rates.

Statistics have been provided by the National Board of Fur Farm Organizations, Inc., showing the constant rise in the number of mink skins being imported into the United States over the past few years and the average prices for these foreign pelts. Up to June 30 over 4,500,000 skins have been brought into our markets, at prices considerably lower than the American cost of production. This does not include skins previously sold and not as yet picked up by the buyers.

We understand that governmental agencies have also compiled statistics covering these imports, but the writer feels it necessary to point out that governmental statistics are made on a calendar year basis, whereas they actually should be made on what is commonly described as a "selling year." By this, I mean that the figures should be compiled starting with the month of December and carry through until November of the following year. This would be the only fair way to arrive at the truth. For example, today there are still remaining to be sold in the Scandinavian auction approximately 1 million mink. In other years these mink would have been disposed of earlier, but since they are still on hand to be marketed, and using past performances as a guide, we can only anticipate that at least 65 percent of them will find their way into our markets this year.

A number of years ago the American mink ranching industry foresaw the problem that now exists and at that time sought to gain relief from imports through the escape clause from a Tariff Commission review. Failure to obtain a favorable decision led to the inevitable, namely, a crash in the market.