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Multiplicity Of Problems Facing The Fox Industry

Research Work At The Dominion. Experimental Fox Ranch, Summerside, Outlined By Superintendent.

(By G. Ennis Smith Superintendent)

Cereal Content of Fox Rations
 Cereals play an important part in the nutrition of foxes. Fox breeders have realized that meat should be fed while still fresh, but have not realized that cereals should also be fed in the fresh state; cereals deteriorate with storage through the action of moulds, yeasts, weevils, etc. Raw cereals have consistently produced better results than any other form of cereals, particularly during the fall months. Experiments are being carried out with rations which contain fresh raw cereals. Wheat, barley, oats and corn grains are being sent to the mill and ground, when required, to insure that the cereals are fresh.

The So-called Milk Fever
 During recent years fatalities amongst new born pups have increased as a result of the females suffering from caked udders. The factors that tend to produce this condition are being studied. The results so far indicate that pregnant females should take the maximum amount of exercise and that ground bone or bonemeal should be included in the ration, and overfeeding avoided. The results definitely indicate that rations suitable for pregnant females in large pens are not favourable for those in small pens.

The Silver Phase
 Records are being kept of the body area and the density of the silver phase of all the experimental foxes. So far the most important factor appears to be the necessity of mating like types of silver together. When like types of silver have been mated together an increase in the body area of the silver has occurred in succeeding years, while the reverse has occurred when unlike types of silver were mated together, that is the foxes have had less silver as one year old than when pups. The mating of like types of silver is more important than mating according to the body area of the silver phase.

Width of Silver Band
 This particular phase is being studied very extensively. Micro-metric determinations of the width of the silver band have been made of all the experimental foxes, and these have been correlated to the breeding results. Here again it appears necessary to mate like types of silver together, or foxes closely related. When this has been carried out in each succeeding year there has been an increase in both brightness and width of the silver band, whereas when unlike types of silver have been mated together a decrease in the width of the silver band has been obtained which decreased still further in each succeeding year with individual foxes.

Fur Characters, Quality
 In the research work with regard to the inheritance of the different fur characters an attempt is being made to evolve definite yardsticks for the various characters in order that measurements may be recorded independent of any personal factor. It is hoped that such yardsticks will definitely determine what actually is quality in silver fox fur and be confirmed by breeding results as to whether the attributes so measured are a criterion of inherent quality. In the final analysis the inherent quality of the foxes is determined by the quality it will produce. Here again the results indicate the necessity of mating like types of fur together. When this has been carried out the foxes have improved in each succeeding year, whereas when unlike types of foxes have been mated together, instead of improving with age they have steadily become worse. There are many known cases where well furred pups have turned into samsons the next year.

Vitamin Requirements
 Of all the various constituents of the diet the vitamins appear to be the most important growth promoting factors, also play an essential role in breeding and in the production of fur qualities of foxes in captivity. Experiments are being carried out to determine the influence of the various vitamins upon the increase in live weight and the development of the fur during the fall months, and on breeding results in general. An abundant amount of vitamin C in the ration appears to be essential during the fall months for obtaining length, strength and colour of the fur, and also a favourable increase in live weight. During the gestation period vitamins B, A and D appear to be the influential factors with regard to the ultimate growth and development of the pups after birth.

Physiological Effect of Anthelmintics and Therapeutics
 Experimental work is being carried out to obtain information regarding the physiological effect and the lethal dose of different therapeutics and anthelmintics. This experimental work should give information so that these can be administered with a greater degree of efficiency and safety.

Digestion Trials
 Experiments are under way to determine the digestibility of different classes of meat and other constituents of fox rations. It is hoped that such experiments will give information which will help to prevent the numerous fatalities that occur each year as a result of digestive disturbances.

Control of External Parasitic Infestation
 This question has been explored and after spraying the nests and kennels with fuel oil twice a year, no fleas or earmites have been observed on any of the experimental foxes for several years. These results have been obtained without the use of flea powders or earmite remedies.

Control of Internal Parasitic Infestation
 While experiments are being carried out with regard to the efficiency and toxicity of different worm remedies, an effort is also being made to ascertain if these parasites can be controlled without direct administration of worm remedies. Different sections of the ranch are being systematically sprayed with different larvicides. Although it is too early as yet to give any definite information, quite favourable results have been obtained by spraying the soil bottom pens with salt and borax solutions. It is hoped from this experimental work that ways and means may be devised for raising pups in soil bottom pens without fear of worm infestation. The present general practice of confining the growing pups to small pens in covered sheds appears to be undermining their constitutional vigour.

Ovulation
 A large number of females have been sacrificed immediately after mating. It was found in those which were killed within five minutes after unlocking that spermatozoa were quite as dense at the ovarian end of the uterus as in the vagina. Hence the taking of smears after mating would not seem to jeopardize the fertilization of the eggs. The most striking fact has been the variation in the development of the different ovaries, which would indicate that in many cases there is a great possibility that only the eggs from one ovary might become fertilized. The variation was great in the foxes kept in small pens. It is a well known fact that females have produced large litters some years and small litters in others under certain ranching conditions. The results so far indicate that it is advisable to mate the females late rather than early in the heat period.

With the increase in the staff it is hoped that more rapid progress will be made and new problems attempted which under previous conditions were altogether impossible. Amid the many varied activities of the Experimental Station the Superintendent is keenly alive to the urgent need for more adequate facilities and still larger staff, required to cope with the multiplicity of problems confronting and harassing the Canadian Fox Industry.

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REGISTRATION

CANADIAN NATIONAL SILVER FOX BREEDERS' ASSOCIATION

Headquarters:—SUMMERSIDE, P. E. I.

Good advice to a rancher anxious to get dependable foxes to stock his ranch or to improve his herd is to attend such a show as the **Charlottetown FOX SHOW**

sponsored by the Prince Edward Island Silver Fox Breeders' & Exhibitors Association

which Organization permits the entries of only registered foxes owned by Canadian National Silver Fox Breeders' Association members. Of such foxes readily available pedigrees may be traced for generations. Pedigree is of the highest importance to a good stockman in upholding and improving the quality of his foxes. Registration of foxes in the Canadian National Live Stock Records of Canada affords the best known means of maintaining correct pedigree so essential to progressive breeders.

The membership fee is now at the reduced rate of \$3.00 while certificates are required for only what foxes are kept as breeders of stock that may be registered or sold standard quality that are producers of litters of at least four pups also of high-standard quality. For fuller information see article 25 of the Constitution.

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CANADIAN NATIONAL SILVER FOX BREEDERS' ASSOCIATION

Headquarters:—SUMMERSIDE, P. E. I.

Palestine Hard On Its Rulers

LONDON, Oct. 30.—(CP)—Sir Donald Storr, himself a former military and civil governor of Jerusalem, has come to the defence of British officials in Palestine where Britain is policeman under mandate.

"They are blamed by everybody," he said in a speech at Ealing, London suburb. "If they take action they are called brutal. If they don't take action they are called slack."

Sir Ronald, who was in Palestine himself in an official capacity for nine years, said David Lloyd George was the only man he knew who "instantly saw the whole position." He recalled a conversation with the former Liberal prime minister on the occasion of his first leave from Jerusalem.

"He greeted me rather sternly and said: 'General Storr, I have complaints against you both from Arabs and from Jews.' I said: 'It is perfectly true, sir. I am trying to be perfectly fair to both sides.' He said: 'Don't forget, General Storr, the moment one side stops complaining you will be dismissed.'"