

QUALITY THE SLOGAN IN PELT PRODUCTION

Digestive Disturbances Responsible For Most Fatalities Among Foxes

Dr. Smith Deals With A Subject Of Great Importance To Fox Ranchers

By G. ENNIS SMITH, Superintendent, Experimental Fox Ranch, Summerside, P. E. I.

The proper digestion of the food is one of the most important factors in raising silver foxes in captivity. If the stomach and intestines can be kept in good condition, favourable fur and breeding developments will follow. Unfortunately, there are many sick foxes throughout the industry due to digestive disturbances, many of which lead to fatal results or to a chronic condition in the stomach and intestines that affect to an alarming extent the fur and breeding qualities of the foxes.

Of all the fatalities referred to the Experimental Fox Ranch during these last two years, the fatalities resulting from digestive disturbances have outnumbered those from all other causes combined nearly ten to one. Last year I visited a ranch in New Brunswick that has lost over thirty pups through bloating the previous day. These pups after being fed lay down on the board floors, bloated, the stomach cavity burst, shooting the contents of the stomach across the pen, as the rancher stated his pups had "blown out". During July, August and September of this year, in many weeks we had three to four reports daily from different fox breeders both on the Mainland and on the Island, who were losing from one to five foxes. During the particularly hot spell we were deluged with reports of outbreaks of diarrhoea, and in the majority of the cases that I investigated, the diarrhoea was the result of an incomplete digestion of the food. While we have had a very alarming

number of fatalities reported to this ranch through bloating and other digestive disturbances, which have been a very serious loss to fox breeders, yet it is very probable that there is still a greater loss through minor digestive disturbances that do not lead directly to fatal results, but do materially affect the fur and breeding qualities of the foxes. This last month I made a tour of New Brunswick and came in contact with fox breeders who had reported losses of both adult foxes and pups through bloating. In the ranch where they had lost thirty pups in one day last year, they informed me that they had fed along the same lines as last year, but had rigidly followed my recommendations and they had not had the slightest sign of that trouble this year. Other fox breeders who had lost five and six and more foxes this year informed me that since following my recommendations, everything was fine and they had no recurrence of the trouble.

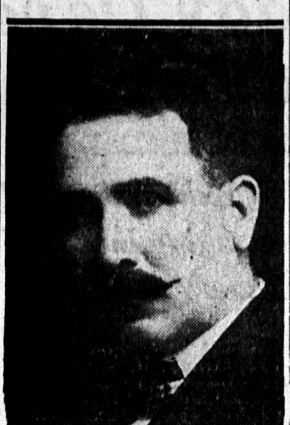
Necessary to Digestion

To have complete digestion of the food it is very necessary that it should be porous to the digestive juices. When starch is digested it is converted into a soluble sugar so that it can pass from the alimentary canal into the circulatory system, and therefore, it is liable to form a slime around the food. A similar condition arises with the digestion of meat and other proteins. They are reduced to amino-acids which have a glue-like consistency. Many fox breeders are of the opinion that when meat is mixed with the cereals they are adding so much roughage, whilst as a matter of fact it is the exact opposite and tends to form a sticky mass which retards the permeation of the digestive juices. In a very large percentage of the fatalities from bloating, the fox breeders have been feeding a mixture of meat and cereals. While it is imperative that this mixture should be fed, and ranching under present-day conditions it cannot be avoided, still it is very imperative that a suitable roughage should be added to a mixture of meat and cereals and fox breeders should not consider meat as a roughage.

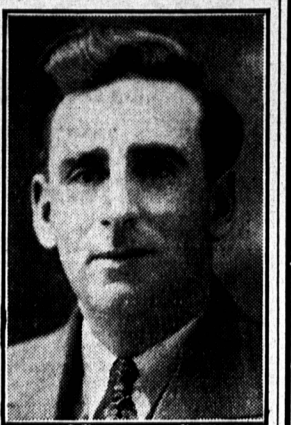
Two Serious Conditions

In our experimental work, especially in the experiments where high cereal rations were being fed, we had to contend with two very serious conditions: First some of the foxes were dying through bloating and secondly a large quantity of undigested cereal food was passing out in the feces. It was found that when suitable roughages were added to the rations there was a complete digestion of the cereals and there was no sign whatever of bloating. It has been the general practice in the Experimental Fox Ranch to add one-quarter of an ounce of bran, one-quarter of an

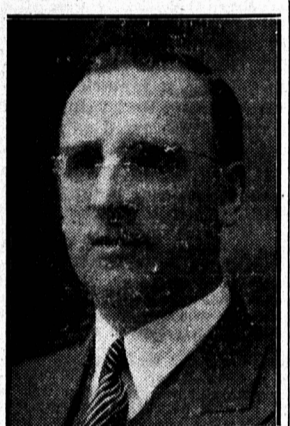
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fox breeders, after feeding a certain brand of fox food without encountering any trouble, will suddenly have disastrous results with a new supply. In the majority of the cases from bloating, the fox breeders have been feeding the same rations previously. Undoubtedly, in the various foods that are sold to fox ranchers there is a wide variety of yeast and moulds, the majority of these are harmless; probably many of them are real assets. A creamery in western Ontario gained a wide reputation for high class butter they were producing, but their buildings were in an abominably dirty condition.

They decided to clean out their establishment. All their equipment was thoroughly scoured and cleaned, and the building painted throughout, but they could never produce the same high class butter they had produced previously. Some culture that was rampant had been lost or destroyed in the general clean-up.

(Continued on page 15)



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OH JOHN! THAT'S BIG-BEN STRIKING THE HOUR IN LONDON
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HOW MANY FOX PUPS?



Raw Cereal Rations

In the Experimental Fox Ranch groups of foxes have been fed raw cereal rations for a period of four and five years, and throughout the whole period there has been a complete digestion of the cereals without any evidence of any undigested food in the faeces. A number of fox breeders have reported to the Experimental Fox Ranch and others through different publications, that a raw cereal ration could not be fed on account of the fact that it passed through in an undigested state. As a complete digestion of raw cereals has consistently been maintained in the Experimental Fox Ranch, it would appear that it was nothing more than blind stupidity on the part of the fox breeders that raw cereal rations were not digestible. But it appears probable they were not following the conditions as practiced in the Experimental Fox Ranch. It has been our practice, except when porridge has been fed, to mix a supply of the cereal foods for one month or two months ahead, which is kept in a separate bin and one bin has been in continuous use for this purpose for over eight years.

Yeast and Mould

In all cereal foods and in foods in general there are various forms of yeast and moulds, and if water should be added to them, they will readily ferment, particularly in a warm room. Practically every bakery throughout the North American Continent is supplied with fresh yeast daily. It would be quite possible for them to make the yeast themselves, but flour contains so many other forms of yeast that the bakers have found from a common experience that they cannot afford to go two days, else they are liable to have a wild culture in the yeast. Hence, yeast makers have initiated a daily service to bakers. Many

Appearances Count Heavily

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Cereal "A" for Pelters
Cereal "B" for Breeders

IN KEEPING with up-to-date feeding practices we manufacture Ross-Miller Vita-Crumbla under two different formulas—"A" for pelters—"B" for breeders. THE PELTERS require a ration that will develop a prime pelt with a dense clear-colored fur.

THE BREEDERS require a ration that will develop vigour and good body condition, a good pelt is a secondary consideration. Under Ross-Miller carefully prepared feeding instructions, breeders are fed 10% more meat than the pelters thus providing them with more animal protein.

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Ross-Miller seasonal feeding chart gives complete and accurate rations for the Fall and early Winter season. Follow the chart, feeding Vita-Crumbla "A" to your pelters and Vita-Crumbla "B" to your breeders, and improper feeding will not handicap the successful operation of your ranch.

R-M CUBES FOR BREEDERS may be used as an emergency feed or for Sunday feeding. R-M CUBES FOR PELTERS can be used as a complete ration or for 70% to 100% depending on the set-up of the ranch. Feed 5 to 7 ozs. as a daily feed, depending on size and appetite.

We will be pleased to answer all specific questions you may have to ask, or place you on our mailing list to receive our regular Seasonal Feeding Charts.

SAMPLES OF OUR FOX FOODS ARE YOURS FOR THE ASKING