



TIMELY NOTES ON TOPICS CONNECTED WITH Silver Fox Farming

John D. J. Forbes, who has been pur Trade Adviser to the Canadian Department of Agriculture since 1928, has resigned his position. He is now in London after having spent the past year in Canada. Mr. Forbes has no definite plans for the future. Prior to accepting the Canadian position he was Managing Director of the London Fur Sales, Ltd., London, and prior to that Manager of the Hudson's Bay Company warehouse, London. He is well known here and general regret is voiced that he has given up his position.

Omar Brager-Larsen, who represents the Norwegian fur farmers in the United States, is authority for the statement that there are still 250,000 foxes in Norway. That figure includes the new arrivals this season. The production of blue foxes is estimated at about 15,000. Mr. Larsen says that the noise of gunfire and aeroplanes was very bad as young pups, but no reliable estimate can be given of the mortality figures.

The American National Fox Breeders Association spent \$5,100 from their reserve fund to secure the passage of the quota restrictions on the import of silver foxes into the United States. Prior to this campaign the duty was 35 per cent with no restrictions on the number of pelts that could be shipped in. There are now 100,000 foxes for Canada \$8,300—and for other countries such as Norway, Sweden, etc.

The 4200 letter for registration in the Canadian National Silver Fox Breeders' Association is U. Foxes are required to be tattooed prior to September 15th. Quite a number of foxes are still members of the Canadian National. A meeting of Directors was held yesterday and Thursday. Among those attending was A. M. Donnelly, L.L.B. of Winnipeg, a former Islander who has made good in fox farming and law in Winnipeg. Arthur has gone in very considerably for foxes, having made good in fox farming and law in Winnipeg. Arthur has gone in very considerably for foxes, having made good in fox farming and law in Winnipeg.

American manufacturers are placing on the market a freezer-cooler for fur farms for \$225. It has capacity of 30 cubic feet with temperature controls ranging from 45 degrees above to 15 degrees below zero in and use, no installation cost for either gas or electric models.

The Hill Packing Company of Topeka, Kansas, operates a trimmer plant for killing horses and the preservation and packing of the meat. They have agencies in 32 cities in the United States and their products are sold in such as trunk meat, ground meat, ground meat and bone, livers and hearts put up in 25 and 50 pound cans. We wonder how many thousands of horses are killed through their plant in the run of a year, possibly 100,000.

Word comes from Maine that Oscar W. Look, who had reached the ripe age of 77, died recently of cerebral hemorrhage. Mr. Look was a man of considerable prominence in the community and had been in business for many years and as a sideline bred silver foxes. For several years he sent his agents to Prince Edward Island, purchasing various types of foxes for his business. He had a deep interest in fur farming up to the last.

The American government has left the fur farmers alone in framing its new defense tax bill. It does not include furs.

Sometime ago a report was prevalent that the Norwegians might sell platinum silver foxes to some selected breeders in the United States and Canada. Now we learn from a New York source that the government of Norway will not allow the exportation of live animals from that country.

We had an interesting conversation with Arthur Doyle of Winnipeg regarding the price of fox food. Art said that it is practically impossible to get cold storage food for foxes. He said that the various ranches by their meats direct to the abattoirs and in order to keep them they must secure cold storage space or have refrigeration on their ranches. He said that the various ranches like McIntosh have cooling plants that cost upwards of \$10,000. In Mr. Doyle's ranch which contains 1,000 mink females as well as a large number of silver foxes, the amount of meat consumed daily is half a ton or more at this season of the year and his cold storage bill is consequently very high. Art is considering the installation of a cooling system at the ranch. Mr. Doyle has been very successful with his mink and foxes, realizing up to \$400 per acre in Montreal for mink pelts this season.

We asked him about the price of certain types of foxes and he said that prices were no lower than on Prince Edward Island, although one would imagine what being cheaper there, or wheat products, would mean a reduction in price. We take it from our conversation with Mr. Doyle that there is very little difference between the cost of producing a pelt in Winnipeg than in Charlottetown, that is where it is done on a large scale.

Further west where Ollie McNeill is located and in centres where horses are plentiful at low prices, feed is much cheaper and ranchers have an advantage. Edmonton and Calgary should be among the cities best adapted to the successful production of fox farming.

Waste face or so-called platinum foxes. As we take it there are very few platinum either mink or fox and the name is therefore a misnomer, but the breeding of the waste face foxes with good silvers is liable to produce a platinum here and there with many in between grades of beauty and desirability. In other words, many are called but few are chosen.

We see nothing to be apprehensive about the pelt situation for 1940 and these are our reasons. First, Norwegian and Swedish pelts will have very little effect if any on the United States markets and not likely into South American markets. That leaves North and South American fox markets to be supplied with Canadian and American pelts. Now the production of Canadian pelts will not be more than one-half as great as last season and there is at least one-third of a cut-down in the United States and in Canada and the United States next season will be the greatest since 1929 due to gigantic expenditures for the production of war material and allied industries entering to war such as clothing, boots and shoes and various food stuffs. While a great deal of this will be taken up in taxes and possibly higher cost of living yet there will be quite a number of people who will have a surplus that they will spend. We should have some of it in our hands for our advertisements in daily papers throughout Canada, featuring the desirability and beauty of silver fox for our feminine friends.

Platinum foxes are being followed by platinum mink and we note where B. Wollman & Brother, New York furrier, has just completed a coat made up of 49 matched platinum mink skins which he is estimating \$39,000. He said that he would take a re-order for ten years delivery. In other words he claims that he will be able to duplicate the coat inside of ten years.

The Department of Agriculture through its fox fieldman W. Fred Burke, is now examining various foxes for parasites in various ranches. Some ranches have been found pretty free from the trouble while others show the presence of acarine mites. Mr. Burke, Honorable Mr. Dennis and the Department of Agriculture are to be very greatly commended for carrying on this highly important work and every rancher who has the presence of parasites should get in touch with the Department and endeavor to secure a survey which will give positive information as to what parasites the ranch is harboring parasites.

A survey made in over 300 ranches in King and Queen's counties in Prince Edward Island shows a fox pup population of about 6,000, exclusive of Raoul Raymond's ranch, McLeure & MacInnes' ranch and a few other ranches that have from 150 to 1,000 pups. The same 300 ranches two years ago averaged over 50 pups. If what is true of the 300 ranches is also true of the remaining ranches in Prince Edward Island the fox pup population this fall will not likely go over the 20,000 mark.

It is regrettable this decline in an once highly profitable and fascinating field of endeavor, but it was inevitable. The fox business has cut down his ranch contributed to the welfare of all. Had the fox farmers of the Dominion of Canada carried on the same number of foxes as they did in 1938 there would have been a tremendous surplus of furs to market, but they looked the facts in the face and loyally co-operated with the Government. They have saved the situation and can look forward confidently to receiving at least the cost of producing their pelts.

The representatives of a fox biscuit firm who has the entire to a great number of ranches says he likes the appearance of the pups and the appearance of the foxes for many years. For one thing they are larger and size means better prices for pelts. We asked him how he accounted for this and he said that fox business has cut down to hardpan and the people that are in it now are not likely to be shaken out of it. In other words it has been a "good" thing that they cannot feed poor diet and get results, so there is more meat fed this year, perhaps because the price is low and all around better feed is given the foxes.

"In my travels," said he, "I have found no indication of disease. Nothing of the mildest sort of an epidemic has been reported. There were some losses in ranches but they were usually not any more than could be expected normally. A few of the places did not seem to take any special care of their foxes as cleanliness and care of feed but most ranchers are taking a genuine interest in their charges and a great many of them read your entitled 'Grow Healthy Chickens' in the pamphlet. It may be obtained free from the Publicity and Extension Division, Dominion Department of Agriculture, Ottawa.

**BREED HEALTHY CHICKS**  
It is impossible to maintain a healthy poultry flock unless one starts with disease free chicks, and this is the desirable condition, states the Agricultural Supplies Board in its special pamphlet of the war-time production series, entitled "Grow Healthy Chickens." It is important to give special consideration to each season's chicks, whether they are produced at home from the existing flock or are purchased from outside. There are relatively few diseases which day-old chicks carry directly from the incubator; consequently, chicks of this age are highly preferable for stocking

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Care of Barn-Yard Manure

(Experimental Farms News)  
As manure is so valuable for maintaining crop production and as losses in its plant food can take place so readily, its care and preservation cannot be emphasized too strongly. A number of important points might be suggested which will lead to considerable saving of valuable fertilizing nutrients in manure.  
First of all, says J. Mooney, Field Husbandry Division, Experimental Farms Service, Dominion Department of Agriculture, precautions should be taken to see that the liquid portion is not lost. In the stable, this includes providing plenty of bedding material to absorb the liquid. Straw is probably the most satisfactory material and is available on most livestock farms. If straw is not available, sawdust, fine shavings, peat moss or dried peat may be used. Superphosphate scattered thinly on the floors lessens the odours of the stable, absorbs some liquid and improves the balance of plant food of the manure. All cracks or breaks in the gutters should be repaired to avoid seepage through the floors. Hauling manure directly from the stable to the field and spreading it daily is a good practice. If manure spread on the field is subject to warm dry winds, considerable loss of nutrients may occur. It is recommended, therefore, that the manure be ploughed into the soil as soon as possible after spreading. It is sometimes desirable to store manure to kill weed seeds or to place it in a pile to prevent washing on sloping land or to meet some contingency when stored in this way, leaching by rain may remove large amounts of the soluble matter from the manure. Much of this loss can be avoided by building a well compacted high heap on a relatively small base. The manure at the top will be leached but this will serve as a seal to prevent access of air to the lower layers. Keeping the pile compact and excluding air encourages fermentation and retains fertility elements. A good method is to pile the manure on a concrete foundation with walls high enough to retain the liquid portion. Re-distributing the drained liquid over the pile helps to keep the manure moist and aids the fermentation process. Driving the team and wagon over the pile or allowing animals to trample over it helps to keep it compact.  
It is not always possible to follow the ideal method but it is well to keep in mind the principles involved and as far as possible make an effort to avoid losses of fertility elements.

**STANDARD FOR DRUGS**  
CALCUTTA.—(CP)—After long delay the Indian Drug Bill has received the approval of the Central Legislative Council. The bill among other things prohibits the sale of drugs and medicines of unsatisfactory quality.  
or restocking purposes. Certain diseases, however, are transmitted by chicks of even this tender age and it is to the poultryman's advantage to know what they are and how they may be avoided.  
These diseases are dealt with in the pamphlet. It may be obtained free from the Publicity and Extension Division, Dominion Department of Agriculture, Ottawa.

Use Minard's for Sprins.

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FOR  
**Prince Edward Island**  
A carefully prepared series of notes of Meteorological and Botanical observations made in the period 1910-1937; and including a short list of common insects.  
By BLYTHE HURST ("Agricola")  
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CONSERVATION

A WEEKLY COLUMN OF PRACTICAL OPINIONS OF THE VITAL ISSUES AFFECTING THE USES AND ABUSES OF NATURAL RESOURCES BY MR. LUDLOW JENKINS MARSHFIELD.

BIRDS AS A FACTOR IN CONTROLLING INSECT DEPREDAATIONS

By Clarence Cottam and Francis M. Utter, Biologists, Section of Food Habits, Division of Wildlife Research.  
That North American birds are regarded as a priceless national heritage is shown by the fact that all but a relatively few species (or groups) are protected by Federal law, by international treaty with Canada (Great Britain) and Mexico, or by the laws of the States or the Canadian Provinces.

Birds are useful as protectors of crops and forests through their feeding of destructive insects, as part of Nature's great balancing mechanism, as scavengers, as game, food, or articles of commerce, or merely as objects of beauty and interest. To a people of sentiment, wildlife or other objects of nature need not be associated with protection sign in order to receive protection and encouragement. We agree with Emerson that "if eyes were made for seeing, then Beauty is its own excuse for being." The esthetic and recreational values of birds, though largely intangible, are just as real as bank accounts or interest on stocks and bonds. Like masterpieces of art or an orchestral symphony they uplift the soul and give meaning and purpose to life. Man is rejuvenated both in spirit and in body by a day's activity, enjoying the charm and beauty of the songs of birds, studying the grace and rhythm of their movements, and partaking of their contagious joyousness. E. H. Forster has well said that "the beauty of birds, the music of their song, the weird wildness of their call, the majesty of their soaring migration, always have been subjects of absorbing interest to poets, artists and lovers of nature." Certainly much of the appeal, beauty, and charm of literature, art, and music would be lost if shorn of their allusions to birds.

Although their esthetic and recreational worth constitutes, perhaps, their greatest value to mankind, birds have so tremendous economic potentialities to which consideration must be given. Probably more than half the forest of the 1,400 species and varieties of North American birds consists of insectivorous birds, through their feeding habits, render incalculable aid to agriculture, horticulture, and forestry.  
The greatest value of birds in the role of insect destroyers lies in the co-ordination of their feeding activities with all other natural factors of the environment in preventing the development to plague proportions of destructive insect eruptions. Birds aid in maintaining an equilibrium in the biotic complex. Their restrictive influence is constantly exerted, and their great mobility and propensity to wander causes them to concentrate at the scene of any local outbreak. Frequently, they not only control a pest, but almost effect its local extermination. Thus they level off the waves of insect abundance and tend to maintain uniformity in numbers. W. L. McAtee has given many examples of the effectiveness of birds in the control or suppression of insect outbreaks and has pointed out that realizing this, entomologists had much to do with the establishment of economic ornithology in this country and have constantly maintained their interest in it.

Although birds often exert an important degree of control on insects, over an extensive area, it is usually only in very limited conditions that they actually suppress them. In widespread invasions, for example, the grasshopper plagues of recent years in the Central and Western States, birds and other predatory agents are not sufficiently numerous to exert any noticeable control. Under these conditions other factors, as unfavorable

climate, fire, and other diseases, artificial control (Poisons), must be relied upon.  
As a control agency, birds, of course, are not wholly effective, as they do not kill all the pests, but they do the same true as every other control measure, biological or artificial. It has been stated that because of the great fecundity of insects in comparison with that of birds, the work of the latter cannot be very effective. Excursions into the realm of mathematics to demonstrate the pestimable number of progeny that may be produced from a single pair of insects profligate, as a continued unchecked increase never occurs.  
The Bureau Entomologist's arguments fail to recognize the importance of the various insect predators, including birds, working in conjunction with all other natural factors of the environment. Insect pests are present in normal numbers. Birds have a high rate of metabolism, which gives them a vast reserve of energy capacity. A bird may destroy more insects at a single feeding than in a lifetime. Furthermore, birds continue to feed during seasons when unfavorable temperatures render insect parasites of little or no value as control agents.  
The sea grant in the beautiful Salt Lake Valley in 1948, which saved the lives of the early Mormon pioneers, is perhaps one of the best-known instances of effective control of a destructive insect pest. In 1855 a similar but less serious and less conspicuous incident occurred in the same valley. The pest was a species of locust developed, which was again suppressed by the California gull early enough in the summer to permit a second planting and a fairly successful harvest. The gulls were on Sea Gull Monument on Temple Square in Salt Lake City, erected at a cost of more than \$400,000 in 1909, and it was the services of these birds in delivering the early Utah pioneers from a cricket plague, is indeed a fitting tribute to the California gull.

The Bureau Entomologist's control ability of birds, many farmers in the West drive chickens and, more commonly, turkeys into their fields and pastures to control "undoubtedly, most of the successful attacks upon developing insect hordes go unnoticed because birds and other insect predators wage their constant and tireless maintenance not for the purpose of assisting man. They often feed indiscriminately upon both valuable and harmful insects, and, although they are not the preferred for certain destructive insects, as indicated by the yellow-billed cuckoo's extensive feeding on tent caterpillars and the blue jay's habit of removing spruce budworm larvae from destructive lepidopterous larvae. To show that control is not a continuous process, one recent example may be cited.  
Concerning the suppressive action of woodpeckers against English spruce beetles on the Kootenai National Forest, Idaho, F. H. Terrell, of the Bureau of Entomology and Plant Quarantine, United States Department of Agriculture, has reported the following statement, which has been confirmed by subsequent investigation:  
"In 1918 a severe infestation of the English spruce beetle was reported to be depleting stands of spruce in the Pinkham Creek drainage on the Kootenai National Forest. A large percentage of the trees were killed, and a great many of the remaining trees were infested. The infestation was reduced to protected brood trees by the action of woodpeckers. The infestation was reported to be depleting stands of spruce in the Pinkham Creek drainage on the Kootenai National Forest. A large percentage of the trees were killed, and a great many of the remaining trees were infested. The infestation was reduced to protected brood trees by the action of woodpeckers. The infestation was reported to be depleting stands of spruce in the Pinkham Creek drainage on the Kootenai National Forest. A large percentage of the trees were killed, and a great many of the remaining trees were infested. The infestation was reduced to protected brood trees by the action of woodpeckers. 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