

Quality In Silver Foxes

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PART I

In visiting different ranches, naturally breeders have shown us what they have considered the best foxes in their ranch. In many cases those foxes have a good length of fur, well covered, they are well furred around the neck and shoulders without any break in the fur, and as the breeders justly point out, they have good names with a clear-cut break between the silver on the body and the black on the neck and shoulders; the silver evenly and well developed on the back and sides; good tails with large white tips; without any sign of any brown shade in either the black or the silver, and the silver hairs have a long black tip, giving that so-called velled appearance, "damnable picture foxes," and you feel like swearing because you only have to put your two fingers through the fur to realize that the breeders are up against a hopeless proposition to get any improvement with such a type of fox. There is no quality to the fur. Quality is the all important factor with regard to any wearing apparel. Fox breeders must remember that the ladies who have the money to purchase silver fox furs are women of taste who have been used to quality in their wearing apparel, and demand quality, also rigidly avoid making a picture of themselves.

A suiting came to me from England, and the firm from which it was procured said that it was the finest piece of cloth that had ever been on their premises. Truthfully, I did not think much of it, nor was I particularly struck with it when I was made up, but after wearing it for several months, under different circumstances, I began to realize that I had something of exceptional quality. It was suitable for every environment, evening parties, out-door parties, or for working, and I noticed that if I sat adjacent to a lady it made her dress look better, and she would invariably remark that that was a very nice suit that I was wearing. There was something in the opinion of the expert that it was the best piece of cloth that had been on their premises. Undoubtedly, it had quality, but I did not recognize it at first and I am quite certain that the member of my

family who bought that did not know it had quality, but simply took the word of a reliable person.

"Quality" Always Counts

Well-dressed ladies, from experience, know that quality is an attraction in itself. I was asked to invite a girl to the annual big dress function of the institution with which I was connected. I spent most of the evening swearing. As she was my guest, I necessarily passed a large part of the evening with her. Wherever we sat invariably a crowd of women would gather adjacent to us and when that place became too crowded I would suggest moving to some quieter place; immediately another crowd would gather around us. Even as we walked down the corridor women would parade within a few feet. A short time after the function I met the person who had requested me to invite the girl and I was asked if she wore her face dress. Immediately that explained the episodes of that night. This particular face dress had been in the family for many years, and it cost a small fortune to have it made up as a dress. Evidently some of the ladies recognized it had quality and probably remarked about it, which made other women curious, particularly if they could not discern that there was outstanding quality in that dress. I myself, was altogether oblivious that the dress had quality, except that I noticed that my dress suit looked better against it than I had ever noticed before. Undoubtedly this face dress was an attraction because it had real quality. The main point regarding furs is that they have a quality that cannot be obtained in any manufactured fabric, so that furs in general, and silver fox furs in particular, while they may not be a picture in themselves, will improve both the looks and the clothing of the wearer.

However important quality may be in silver fox furs as a wearing apparel, it is ten times more important to the fox breeders from a breeding standpoint. Without quality the breeder is against a hopeless proposition to obtain any marked improvement. On the other hand, if there is quality, with proper breeding and feeding meth-

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TIMELY NOTES ON TOPICS CONNECTED WITH Silver Fox Farming



The Western Canada Fur Exhibition held at Winnipeg November 12th to 15th was a most successful show in all respects. Over forty exhibitors with about 400 animals representing Quebec, Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta and British Columbia, were present. The judging was closely watched, particularly in the fox and mink classes and the exhibitors were satisfied with the decision of the judges. The prizes were well distributed among the different exhibitors, proving that there was immense improvement in average exhibits.

The presentation of all animals at the tables, was well handled by the committee in charge, which was under the supervision of Mr. A. M. Doyle, formerly of Prince Edward Island. Mr. Robert W. Fraser of New York was the judge of the silver fox classes and Mr. H. P. Warner and Mr. Joseph Gassner, both of Winnipeg, judged the mink classes. The veterinary inspector was Dr. J. A. Allen, B. V. Sc.

In connection with the exhibition, a series of lectures and discussions were arranged by Dr. J. A. Allen, in which many speakers of high repute took part. Mr. Robert W. Fraser of New York, gave an address on the types of fox and mink skins desired by markets. In the course of his address he stated that in his opinion silver fox had not reached the saturation point yet, but was due for a long run.

The Robert Fraser referred to above is a brother of the late Alfred Fraser of New York, who for so many years represented C. M. Lampson & Co. there and made annual visits to this province. Robert Fraser is now the representative of Lampson's in New York and Alfred Fraser's son Tom, pays the annual visit here.

Space does not permit us to give the whole story of Mr. Fraser's address, but the following are extracts from it. "I have been in the fur business for a long time and I very well remember when many years ago in London at Lampson's Spring sale, which at that time was the largest of the year, the English dealers all made annual trips to London to buy fox furs and we were then getting fairly good sized quantities of ranch raised silver fox—about 100 skins.

The particular sale that I had referred to in the above article had something over 500 skins, 100 ranch raised and the balance wild caught. Instead of advertising 500 we advertised 492, to keep it below the 500 mark so the buyers would not be afraid. A year or so later we had a thousand fox and we advertised it 999. Each sale the skins all sold and we were asked "When can we get more?" Each year we have been having more and now we get thirty or more thousand skins for a sale and we get them sold and do not have enough.

This year (1935) we have handled over seventy thousand skins and we have not got a dozen skins left from our last season's collection. The trade is still asking "When is the new crop coming on?" Last year there must have been four hundred thousand silver fox marketed, some say four hundred and twenty-five thousand. They are all gone.

When I left New York a week or so ago, buyers of silver fox were inquiring about the new crop. They said they needed it, they certainly do not look as though we had reached the saturation point yet and personally I cannot imagine their being so plentiful that there will no longer be any use for them.

A few years ago silver fox averaged \$100 and when an article is selling for that amount it is very easy to anticipate a drop of 50% in the price. Today foxes are within the means of fairly well-to-do people and I do not think any decline is to be expected. The fur business has been going on for many centuries and silver foxes are being produced on an ever increasing scale.

Kind of foxes to raise. From the viewpoint of the fur trade, why do you raise scrubby, long foxes and not more of the fine silver fox and beautiful tails, tips, etc.? People in the fur trade do not have to contend with the problem you have. They just buy them, work them up and sell them at a profit. The type of fox that the fur trade wants is the fairly silvery skin, good body of fur, dark underfur type of skin that lends itself best in the scarf, trimming, etc.

Where a few good foxes are produced, there have to be a lot of poor or mediocre. There are also uses

for poor foxes. They are all cut up, one way or another there is a use for them and the price you get for them at times amazes you. It is fortunate that there is an outlet for foxes of any kind, but everybody should strive to improve theirs all the time.

Good breeders tell me that the best way to improve your foxes is to mate the best individuals in the ranch. Do not mate good grade and poor and expect to have good foxes, as it is generally a downward step. Fair your best foxes and I think you should raise your standard and not lower it."

Commenting on the demand for mink Mr. Fraser said: "Next to silver fox the article most in demand is mink. The wild caught skins are getting scarce in the western districts and the mink from the southern part of the United States is a common, coarse type, but the mink from the eastern sections of Canada, northern and north-western sections are dark, fine-textured fur, light pelts, not very large in size but beautiful and they can be made up into the finest garments where the ordinary run of the wild caught are only third or fourth class as compared to ranch raised mink."

Certainly the fur trade will always pay a premium for light pelts. It takes 70 or 80 skins to make a coat. If you get light pelts, when 60 or 70 skins are made up into a coat, there is quite a difference in the weight. Such a coat will bring anywhere from five to six hundred dollars more than a heavy coat. You will find a good premium for light weight medium pelts providing you have the color and fur.

In selecting your breeding animals, you will find that those from Quebec, Labrador and Northern Ontario will be light-colored mink. The prairie country will have larger mink with heavy leather. Farther south heavy leather and poorer and coarser fur. My advice is to concentrate on mink from the best sections and stick to the best type. Select mink that have the blue cast and discount skins with reddish or yellowish tints. If you stick to the blue background you have the best type of mink produced. Another thing is the length of the ground fur. The fur trade prefers short nap mink, instead of mink with long, as it makes up into much better finished garments."

Commenting on the day's judging of silver foxes Mr. Fraser remarked that there had not been a poor fox placed on the table. The average improvement over previous exhibitions at Winnipeg was remarkable.

After his address Mr. Fraser was deluged with questions and the following are a few of the answers given to them. About 8% of all foxes marketed are clear of rust and the balance more or less rusty. About 40% are fairly clean and the balance decidedly rusty. The average run is improving from year to year. Several large American fox ranches have developed their own type of fox and have found a market which depends upon them for that type of fox. (We presume Mr. Fraser has reference to Fremont Bros. and Niemair Bros. whose ranches produce annually some thirty thousand pelts in aggregate.)

Dr. R. A. Wardell of the University of Manitoba was a speaker at the above show and in his address discussed heredity and animal breeding, illustrating same with lantern pictures and charts. He suggested that a good rule in dealing with fur bearing animals might be to line breed or inbreed from desirable individuals. He pointed out, however, that the result of line breeding continued too long usually results in loss of vigor, mortality at birth, mortality between birth and weaning, small litters and susceptibility to disease. When, however, the individuals from two separate lines from the same foundation are mated, the vigor is restored in the offspring from such a mating.

Dr. Ronald G. Law of the Ontario Experimental Farm, followed Dr. Wardell with an address on feeding the fox and mink. It was full of information and very closely listened to. At its conclusion he was asked a number of questions of which these are a few.

(1) Is it better to feed once or twice daily? Dr. Law said that he was in favor of feeding once a day

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for both adults and pups. "We have tried feeding pups both ways," said Dr. Law, "and it makes no difference at all."

(2) Should animals have one cereal one day and a different one the next or should the cereals be mixed? Dr. Law said it was better to mix them up, cornmeal, rice, bread, etc.

(3) "What is the most practical way to feed iodine to animals?" asked Dr. J. A. Allen. "There are two or three different ways," said Dr. Law, "I think the best method is the salt lick, which is put in the pen where the fox can get at it. This may not be applicable to winter feeding, however."

(4) What about feeding iodized salt, asked another breeder. "Most commercial foods have this in them," replied Dr. Law.

Mr. Klinsberg of Winnipeg, wanted to know what combination of foods if any, encouraged the growth of white underfur. "This growth is purely a hereditary factor," said Dr. Law, "and it cannot be influenced from feed."

A discussion took place regarding the best treatment for ear-mites. Dr. Law's formula was equal parts balsam of peru, alcohol, ether and iodine. Dr. Allen's formula was 50% form, one part, ether ten parts, liquid petrolatum 30 parts.

A query as to what to do about round or hook worms in mink brought a reply from Dr. Law that mink did not have hookworms and very few round worms.

J. Walter Jones, M.A., M.L.A., was the speaker at the weekly meeting of the Charlottetown Fox Club on Thursday evening. Mr. Jones' remarks were confined principally to the breeding problems of the fox rancher. In simple words he defined inbreeding, line breeding and other phases of fox breed improvement. Several very interesting points were brought out in the address which was listened to with rapt attention by the largest attendance so far in the history of the Club—48.

Mr. Jones' record as a cattle breeder is so well known that it is not necessary to refer to it and of course he is a large silver fox

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breeder. Comparing the two occasions he said that the fox breeder can see the result of his breeding improvement in a much shorter time than can the cattle breeder who has to wait several years before he is definitely sure whether he has improved or retrograded in his matings—because with the dairy cattle breeder milk is his objective; with the fox rancher the pelt attains its good or bad qualities the first season.

Reports received by the various fur houses from the December London fur auction show that the demand for silver foxes continues of the series and the members hope to have Mr. Jones address them again in the near future. Plans are now under way for something very interesting ere long, but we have been pledged to secrecy by the President, so mum's the word!

The lecture was one of the best (Continued on page 13)

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500 FOXES EXHIBITED — 50 EXHIBITORS — 265 CLASS AWARDS — 42 1st PRIZE AWARDS — 20 CHAMPIONSHIPS AND RESERVES
31 1st Prizes awarded to SUNGLO feeders feeding from 25% to 100% SUNGLO Rations.
175 Class Awards awarded to SUNGLO feeders feeding an average of 40% SUNGLO rations.
7 Championships and Reserve Championships awarded to SUNGLO feeders feeding an average of 1/3 SUNGLO rations.

Maritime Winter Fair Fox Show

Amherst N.S.
194 FOXES EXHIBITED — 15 EXHIBITORS — 162 CLASS AWARDS — 42 1st PRIZES — 22 CHAMPIONSHIPS AND RESERVES
32 1st Prize Awards awarded to SUNGLO feeders feeding from 20% to 100% SUNGLO rations.
135 Class Awards awarded to SUNGLO feeders feeding an average of 47% SUNGLO rations.
15 Championships and Reserve Championships awarded to SUNGLO feeders feeding an average of 50% SUNGLO rations, these included the Champion and Reserve Champion Pups, Champion Adult Fox and Grand Champion Fox of the show.
Grand Champion Fox of the show fed 100% SUNGLO rations.

Borden, P. E. Island Show

252 Foxes Exhibited. At this show the heaviest SUNGLO feeder, using 2/3, (65%) SUNGLO rations and exhibiting only pups, won the following: Grand Champion Pup of the Show; Reserve Grand Champion Pup of the Show; Champion Male Pup; Champion Female Pup; Reserve Champion Male Pup; Reserve Champion Female Pup. Best Matched Pair of Pups.
The second heaviest SUNGLO feeder, using 60% SUNGLO feeds won the Reserve Grand Championship of the show.
NOTE:—Other details lacking at this writing.

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MERRILL G. HART

N. E. Margaree, N.S.
Nov. 28, 1935.

Int. Fox & An. Foods, Ltd., Summerside, P. E. I.
Gentlemen:

We had our fox show here November 9th. Ranchers using "SUNGLO" won about 75% of the awards. I won 2 seconds and one third.

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(Signed) MERRILL G. HART

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The percentages of SUNGLO FEEDS as shown above refers to the per cent. of SUNGLO rations used of total cereal fed during late Spring, Summer and Fall months. ALL PERCENTAGES ARE ACTUAL PERSONAL STATEMENTS FROM OWNERS. SUNGLO BREEDING RATION should be started on your Breeding Foxes December 15th. We produced 196 pups alive at 4 weeks from 44 females last season (39 litters). Why not line up with the Successful Ranchers Now, and begin using SUNGLO FEEDS AND PRODUCTS.

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