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**TIMELY NOTES ON TOPICS CONNECTED WITH Silver Fox and Mink Farming**

Robert Eadie of Cornell University, has an article in a recent issue of National Fur News entitled, "The Average Farm Is A Rat Paradise". We quote in part: "The average farm is a paradise for rats. Food and shelter are plentiful, the two necessities for an easy life for these destructive pests. Each rat boarder can destroy at least 100 pounds of grain, feed or produce every year by eating or polluting it. In addition they damage farm structures and may carry disease to man or livestock. As long as conditions favor rats they will be present no matter how many are destroyed, thus cutting off their food and shelter is an important step in rat control."

"This can be done by a little direct action. Farm foods and produce should be stored in rat-proof bins or rooms. Feed bins can be made rat-proof by lining them completely with sheet metal or heavy screening. Smaller amounts of feed can be stored in storage rooms having concrete floors can be made rat-proof, lining the lower two feet of wall with heavy screening and by edging the lower portion of the door and jamb with sheet metal. The door should have a regular spring windows or other openings should be screened or closed. To rat-proof a room with a wooden floor,

**-NEWSY NOTES-**  
By J. A. Clark, D.M.S.

**Poisonous Plants**

Some years ago the Experimental Farms Branch of the Dominion Department of Agriculture issued Bulletin No. 39, Second Series, by Faith Fyles, entitled "Principal Poisonous Plants of Canada." This bulletin was exceedingly well illustrated by thirty-four photographs and eight coloured drawings by the author, so that most of these poisonous plants could be recognized by farmers and stockmen in their fields and on areas of uncultivated land.

In different localities, most of these plants have more than one common name, and the author, to assist in their identification, has recorded from three to seven of these names used to describe the plants. The index of the bulletin lists 574 common and scientific names for the 72 poisonous plants described, which belong to 26 families. Accurate drawings of the leaves of 60 of these plants are also given.

This bulletin remains a standard work on poisonous plants. It also gives details of the symptoms of poisoning caused by these plants, and suggests what should be done.

We cannot remember of an outbreak of Anthrax during our term of fox farming, but in 1930 the Norwegian Government put on an embargo against our foxes, claiming that there was a possibility of Anthrax outbreaks here. The charge, we believe, was trumped up to prevent the importation of any more foxes into that country. Several people who had orders for silver foxes, some in large quantities, met with a great loss because of their inability to fulfill the contracts.

A collection of 18,724 ranch mink described as ordinary towards poor, was 65 per cent sold at the New York Auction Company's sale last week. Females were up 5 per cent and males firm. Top price was \$24.50. An offering of various Sapphires was described as ordinary resulted in a sale of 82 per cent of the pastels with a \$88 top. Thirty per cent of the Green-eye pastels sold up to \$50; 77 per cent of the Aleutians were sold at a top of \$56; 83 per cent of the Sapphires were sold with a top of \$119 and the top price for whites was \$49. These prices are considered as unchanged in comparison with June sales. In ranch mink interest appeared best for the cheaper goods and especially low-end females for chokers. Best bidding was apparent for females around \$9 and \$10.

Canadian Fur Auction Sales Co. (Quebec) Ltd. will hold a special sale in Montreal commencing August 14th. The following furs will be offered: Beaver, muskrat, otter, ranch mink and Canadian squirrel. Canadian auction also announces the next general sale originally set for September 8th has been postponed to Sept. 15th.

Prices were mostly unchanged at the July fur auction of the Canadian Raw Fur Auction Sales, Ltd. held in Vancouver. Ranch mink were slightly higher than June with rats and beavers unchanged. All long-hair furs were withdrawn. Muskrats were 80 per cent sold with Yukon and northern Alberta's bringing \$2.10. Ranch mink was 75 per cent sold, males extra large and large brought \$20 to \$25. In secondary type, dark and dark brown males brought \$17 to \$19, females \$8.50 to \$9.75, silverbush of good average lots, \$14 to \$16, pastels, good colors in average sizes, \$25 to \$29, mediums, \$23 to \$24.

**From the Records**

**TOTAL ASSURANCE IN FORCE \$3,000,000,000**

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**P. E. Island Plants Injurious To Animals**

The following list mentions only the plants that have caused the greatest loss of animals.

Horses: Ergot, Horsetail, purple cockle, water hemlock.

Cattle: Ergot, cockle, larkspur, poison hemlock, water hemlock, water parsnip, laurel, ragwort.

Sheep: Ergot, purple cockle, lupinus, poison hemlock, water hemlock, laurel.

Swine: Purple cockle, water hemlock.

Poultry: Ergot, purple cockle.

While some of these plants are very dangerous while in the succulent stage in pastures early in the spring, it is usually when pastures are dry and short from mid-summer on that animals, which usually avoid poisonous plants, eat them and are poisoned. Pastures in this Province have been exceedingly good for more than a year and very few cases of poisoning have been reported, however, the period is now approaching when every precaution should be taken to prevent the stock from having a chance of getting access to poisonous plants.

**Fungus Plant Parasites Poisonous To Animals**

The most common poisonous parasite associated with plants is ergot of rye. It affects rye, barley and eighteen or more different grasses. These plants are spoken of as hosts and the ergot or black mass usurps the seed of the plant and is the resting period in the life cycle of the fungus, which is dormant during the winter.

It germinates and sends forth a great number of spores the next season, at the time the host plant is in bloom. A spore falling on a floret of the host develops another reproductive form of the fungus, and the injured host plant produces a honey dew that contains these forms of the fungus and attracts insects which carry to other hosts this most virulent type of infection, which reproduces ergots on susceptible host plants throughout considerable distances. In the autumn, ergots formed on these drop to the ground and continue the life cycle.

Ewart states that: "A comparatively small number of fresh ergot grains suffice to injure or kill a horse, cow or sheep." They are poisonous to man and all domesticated animals. Ergot in grain and grasses causes abortion in all types of animals.

A fungus that develops on Ragwort was the cause of the Pictou cattle disease, which caused very heavy losses of cattle in Pictou County, Nova Scotia, and in Prince Edward Island. The late Dr. W. H. Pethick discovered that ragwort was responsible for the disease, and recommended eradication methods which include the pasturing of sheep on the infected areas, and the removal of ragwort from all hay. These measures were so effective that the disease disappeared.

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We are proud to notice that our good friend Lowell Hancock, a man with a scientific education who has been one of our leading producers of silver fox and mink and always to the front in any good work for the community, has interested himself in the rat menace and is now placing on the market a Warfarin preparation called Deth that is absolutely effective and can be purchased in shops and drug stores.

Raw fur production in Canada in the 1950-1951 season—exclusive of Newfoundland—was valued at \$31,134,000, an increase of 26 per cent over the preceding year's figures of \$23,184,000. The number of pelts taken during the year was 7,479,000 as against 7,377,000 the year before. Mink is the principal fur produced, being valued at \$14,618,000 compared with \$10,477,000 in 1949-1950, followed by muskrat at \$6,646,000 compared with \$5,334,000. Other figures are, beaver, \$4,263,000, compared with \$3,305,000; squirrel, \$1,943,000, compared with \$871,000; ermine, \$806,000, compared with \$934,000; white fox, \$684,000, compared with \$167,000; silver fox including mutations, \$675,000, compared with \$899,000; marten, \$539,000, compared with \$271,000, and otter, \$374,000 compared with \$242,000.

Exports of Canadian raw furs in 1950-1951 were valued at \$29,884,000 as compared with \$21,947,000 the previous year. While the imports totalled \$21,783,000 as against \$16,118,000. Mink, beaver, muskrat, squirrel and fox were the chief exports while Persian lamb, muskrat, mink and rabbit were the leaders among the imports.

Two mink ranches in Wisconsin were recently hit with Anthrax. This acute infectious, deadly disease is caused by feeding meat from infected animals. Being a spore-forming bacteria it is long lived in the soil and once established can break out again in act-

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Do your part to save our irreplaceable forests! Put out your lighted matches. Never throw a lighted cigarette from a car. Extinguish your camp-fires . . . with water. Never leave a rubbish fire untended. Urge care on others.

And most important . . . at all times . . . **BE CAREFUL!**

**DEPARTMENT OF INDUSTRY AND NATURAL RESOURCES**  
FORESTRY DIVISION  
EUGENE CULLEN, Minister.