

TIMELY NOTES ON TOPICS CONNECTED WITH Silver Fox And Mink Farming

Some thirty or forty years ago chinchilla was one of the high-priced pelts marketed on the London auctions. They were scarce and were obtained from the Peruvian Andes mountains. The animals frequented the deep forests there. They were difficult to trap and often the pelts were damaged but a good specimen with its soft bluish fur was greatly admired by persons who knew a quality article. On our first visit to the Hudson's Bay Company, London, England, with W. Chester S. McClure, we were shown their collection of chinchilla. The manager said that the pelts had become scarcer through the years and the quality was not as good.

As the years went by chinchilla seemed to fade out of the picture on the auctions but we learned that a Major Hamilton, who had established a fox farm in Scotland, was also endeavoring to procure live chinchillas and farm them either in the United States or in the Old Country. Just who brought out the first specimens we cannot definitely say, but we believe they were domiciled in California. That must have been some 15 years ago and since then chinchilla breeding stock has been sold throughout the United States and various parts of Canada, in fact some pairs have recently been purchased in this province. There have been many statements made about the value of the pelts and certainly the advertising and all the particulars about them sounded extremely good. Now we are able to give to our readers the story of how a large number of chinchilla pelts sent in by the top breeders have fared when placed on the auction block, which is the ultimate test of any fur. The story below is taken from an authentic source, Women's Wear Daily, New York.

Sam Gottesfeld reporting this sale states: The fur trade showed interest in better quality chinchilla pelts but turned up its nose at lesser quality merchandise as Empress chinchilla made its debut at the New York Auction Company here. Buyers generally drew the line between wanted and unwanted merchandise at about the \$40 mark. About 12 per cent (about 1200) of the 10,600 Empress pelts brought \$40 or more and well over half of these were knocked down at about \$45 to \$50. Interest in pelts under the \$40 level was generally very dull. These pelts, which the sales room characterized as casty, off-color or damaged, were mostly bought or officially withdrawn.

The collection averaged \$36.77, according to spokesmen for Farmers Chinchilla Co-operative of America which marketed the pelts. The auction house reported that 50 per cent of the cash value of the pelts offered were sold. This figure did not include the skins officially withdrawn but did include the buy-backs and their valuations. The first lot offered brought the top price of \$175, going to Ritter Bros., manufacturers. The second lot brought \$100. Only two other lots brought \$100 or more and three at \$75 to \$100. A total of 19 lots ranged between \$50 and \$75. Russoks were reported to be the biggest buyer at the sale.

When it became apparent in mid-afternoon that the poorer pelts were attracting little or no interest some 200 lots were officially withdrawn. There were 530 lots in the original collection. When the auction began at 2 p.m. the sales room was jammed to capacity plus a good overflow of standees along the rear and side walls. The advance publicity was probably the greatest in the recent history of the fur industry. The contagion of excitement, however,

did not spread to the buyers, who displayed extreme selectivity and bid briskly only for top quality merchandise. The bulk of the buying came from prestige houses in the manufacturing and retail field, most of whom had tied in previously in the advance promotion of the item.

Stanley Pangborn, president of the Chinchilla Association, said the close of the auction: "We should have established higher quality standards for Empress chinchilla. It was difficult to set such standards before the auction. Now we know our standards are going to have to be a lot higher." He estimated that less than 30 per cent of the offering could be considered good quality in the light of the trade's reception to the auction. He voiced satisfaction, however, with the average price received. At least three times during the sale limits were adjusted downward. By page 17 of the catalogue the auctioneer started calling bundles at \$10, and some of these lots were bought back at \$11.

By 3 p.m., after the choice merchandise had gone on the block, the salesroom began thinning out. Bids were few and far between, and soon the chinchilla breeders observing the sale far outnumbered the potential buyers. After 4 p.m. the sale ended abruptly as the final pages were withdrawn. One section of seats was entirely filled by chinchilla breeders. Many of them, particularly those who had paid high prices for breeding stock and are raising a few animals in their backyards, were doomed to disappointment. In addition, the market for breeder animals has suffered a tremendous blow, according to trade sources. Nevertheless the association spokesmen now feel that the chinchilla pelting industry can grow and prosper commercially on the basis of the over \$36 average attained at the sale. Commenting on the auction, one commercial breeder said: "I've seen a lot of chinchilla I wouldn't spend \$15 for. I guess the furriers are smarter than the breeders." At any rate, Mr. Pangborn said, the auction establishes the price of its major purposes. He indicated that the job aimed was mainly one of herd improvement.

Discussing the above sale in another issue of Women's Wear Daily Sam Gottesfeld has the following: Trade sources could not agree yesterday whether Monday's Empress chinchilla auction was a success or a flop, but they did agree breeders have a big job ahead to improve the quality and color of pelts. Harold Russek, executive vice-president of Russeks Fifth Avenue, commented: "The fact that we were as large a buyer as we were, indicates our enthusiasm for chinchilla. The average price was lower than we had expected, which is very good. It doesn't make the article prohibitive in price, and gives us a better chance of selling it. The price will help make chinchilla. He felt that chinchilla will create prestige and excitement for the entire fur industry and stated that Russeks will launch production of Empress chinchilla garments and trimmings next week and it is possible they might create a chinchilla coat as well as small pieces.

Louis Wheeler, executive vice-president of Gunther Jaeckel, which took on only a few pelts, expressed the opinion that the auction prices for top quality pelts might give breeders a false sense of security. Even if the herd were to be improved, he said, prices would not match those reached at Monday's sale. He indicated that prices were generally too high, having been inflated by a number

NEWSY NOTES

By J. A. Clark, D.S.

PASTURE FERTILIZATION AND MANAGEMENT

When we speak of good use being made of our land, we think not only of the profitable use of the land, but that the land should increase in fertility and improve in soil texture. There are soil depleting crops, that are generally grown in rotation, so that frequently the depreciation in fertility and in the water holding capacity of the soil is not noticed. Potatoes, coarse grains, wheat, corn and roots are soil depleting crops. Our best soil conservation crops are: Hay that has an abundance of clover present and pastures.

When pastures and hay crops are well fertilized and properly managed, the soil continues to improve in fertility and in soil structure. Our clovers, through the presence of certain bacteria on their roots, gather nitrogen from the air, and provide a supply of this valuable plant food for grasses and other plants that follow in the rotation. This season has been favourable for our pastures, and the yield of green matter, (grass and clover) has been phenomenal, however, over the years comparatively light applications of lime and phosphorus have worked wonders under good grazing management, that is, sufficient stock should be placed on the pasture to take care of the lush June growth. When this is not possible, the pasture should be clipped before the grasses head out. Over grazing should also be avoided, and the grasses and clovers should be permitted to make a good autumn growth before winter.

Semi-permanent pastures have been established on the Illustration Stations on Prince Edward Island. We have taken a hasty look over those at Alliston, Monticello and Long River. The first two are on light soils and it took a number of years to develop a good sod. The one at Long River was a good, average soil that had been eroded, as the field has such a steep slope that the owner at one time considered returning it to forest conditions. When the pasture work was started there, the area had a fair stand of bent and other natural grasses, with a little clover. The splendid stand of pasture grasses on all these station areas is such that we do not expect that they will need reseeding for many years. Some would call them permanent pastures.

In 1933, the Long River pasture received 150 pounds of Sulphate of Ammonia, 350 pounds of Superphosphate and 100 pounds of Muriate of Potash per acre. During the next two years, this application was cut in half, but the same amount of fertilizer was used in 1935 as in 1933. The fertilizer was again reduced by one-half in 1937. During those years the carrying capacity per acre for the grazing season was used as a comparison between the fertilized areas and the

check areas. The results showed that the use of fertilizer more than doubled the amount of forage each year, except for 1935, and that year it gave an increase of 66 per cent. From 1933 - 1941, three different fertilizer treatments were given, the basic fertilizer being at the rate of 400 pounds of 0-16-6 per acre, to 100 pounds of Nitrate of Soda or Sulphate of Ammonia were added each spring. When compared with the checks, the amount of forage more than doubled in 1938, while in 1939 it was more than four times as great. The area continued to increase in production from year to year, so that the 1941 yields were more than three times as great as the 1939. Even the average check yields had increased over six times their production from 1.04 tons to 6.3 tons per acre of green forage in 1941. The yield on lot C that year was 15.8 tons per acre. Satisfactory returns were secured from the fertilized pasture plots in 1942 and 1943, even when the checks were too short to cut, in 1942.

More elaborate fertilizer experiments were carried on from 1944 to 1953. Annual applications of fertilizer were made to certain plots, while others received fertilizer applications only at three-year intervals. One remarkable thing about this work was that the checks, without fertilizer, increased in tons of green matter per acre, from 5.31 tons to an average of 12.74 tons per acre. An annual application of 761 pounds of a mixed fertilizer increased yields from 17.33 tons in 1945, which was the outstanding production that year among the seven test plots, to 38.37 tons of green forage per acre in 1953. The average production of this whole area for nine years was 23.72 tons per acre.

The area at Long River was subject to extreme soil erosion before a good, thick sod was established. The sod now on the area breaks the impact of the heaviest rains. It prevents the runoff and loss of water during the growing season, the roots of the grasses and clovers have greatly improved the soil structure, so that it can be described as a crumb structure and texture that is capable of absorbing much more rain. The field is a steep side hill, and has improved greatly in fertility.

Rotational pastures, that is, pastures that have been divided so that animals can be moved to fresh grass every week or ten days, have generally proved beneficial, but the gains have not usually been sufficient to pay for the fencing material and the extra time involved.

From data collected in 1953, at a hydrologic station near Guelph, Ontario, it was found that there were no soil or water losses from a three-year-old hay plot, nor from a woodlot plot. Where oats and hay were used in alternate strips along the slope, a loss of 3,000 pounds of soil was recorded; but when the oats were planted up and down the slope, the soil loss amounted to 18,000 pounds per acre.

On our way home from Madison, Wisconsin, in June, we spent a short time at the Ontario Agricultural College, and learned something of the splendid work of two Prince Edward Islanders working in the Field Husbandry Division: Dr. Donald Huntley, Dean of the Division, and Prof. George Jones, who is working to develop improved strains of soy beans. Their winter wheat had headed out, and strains resistant to blight were simple immense. We attended a banquet, and meetings of the Soil Conservation Society of America, with soil specialists present from the United States and Canada. They had visited, during the afternoon, a veteran's farm near Alton, Ont., and were amazed at the results obtained by Mr. Alfred Leatherbarrow, who, with a 40 per cent disability from the war, and no previous farm experience, had, in three years, while making a living on what was a poor farm, with the help of his wife, had changed a grass and grain farm entirely into grass land farming. They now have on their hundred acres: Seventy beef cattle, 140 hogs (English Yorkshire) and 1400 hens. With grass and clover they have effectively stopped erosion throughout their rolling land. They use a trench silo for the grass-legume hay. They

secure a cash income from poultry and buy Western grain at about two cents per pound. They sell breeding pigs at premium prices. Their grass land farming has a low capitalization in machinery and low operating expenses. Prince Edward Island is most admirably adapted to grass farming, because our soils and climate are most favourable. All the best hay and pasture grasses when properly fertilized and managed, will produce maximum yields of the very best quality of forage for stock. With well stocked farms to use this forage, the farms will not only prosper, but they will increase in fertility, and the generations following will reap the benefits handed down to them by good husbandry.

STAITHES, England, (CP) — A chicken was hatched in this York-shire district with three legs and four feet. There are two feet on one of the legs.

TORONTO (CP)—Gerald Goodwin, 34, of Ottawa, a carnival sword-swallower, Wednesday was committed for trial on a charge of assault causing grievous bodily harm to Oliver Thornbury, 21. The stabbed six times in the back June charge was reduced from 'at 3 during a scuffle at the darkened tempted murder. Thornbury was carnival grounds in a city park.

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TIP NO. 45

Like any other poultry diseases, the prevention of worms is far more satisfactory than any treatment or control. However, if worms are known to be present, a treatment should be given while the pullets are on range and just before they are housed.

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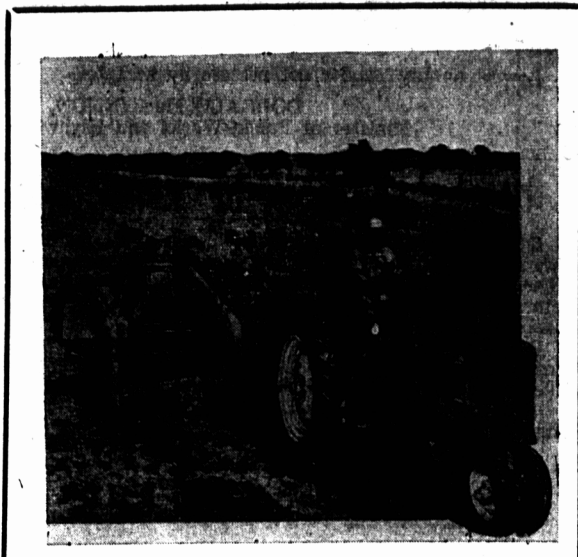
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