Fur Farming Possibilities

This Comparatively New Industry Offers Many Opportunities Along Different Lines

AN EXPERT'S VIEW

The Editor is glad to be able to give the readers an article from the pen of one of the best posted men in the fur farming industry. For certain private reasons the author wishes to remain anonymous, but has agreed to answer any fur farming questions that may be addressed to the Editor, Wilson Publishing Co., 73 Adelaide St. W., Toronto 2.

On Firm Base.

With the natural supply of wild life decreasing from year to year, fur farming has lately come rapidly to the front as the only logical method of supplying the ever increasing demand for fur. Efficient game laws properly enforced and restricted areas set aside for game reserves, can only help to stave off the not far distant day when our fur bearing animals will be a memory of the past, or represented by a few remaining specimens in zoological gardens and government parks, unless the propogation of such animals can be successfully accomplished under conditions approximating those of our domestic animals. That there are enterprising individuals who believe this to be the case, and in many instanees are actually proving it by results, is demonstrated by the number of fur farms now operating in the Province of Ontario.

Fur farming in its many phases will become a legitimate branch of animal husbandry and in time demand from the various governments the same amount of encouragement and helpful research work which has been devoted to our domestic animals.

Birth of the Industry.

It is greatly to the credit of the pioneers of the industry that they have carried on in the face of what at times appeared to be unsurmountable difficulties and discouragements, with little or no help from scientific sources. Due to the very high prices prevailing for the silver and black fox pelt, it was natural that the first attempt to propogate fur bearing animals in captivity was made with them.

Almost simultaneously several men conceived the idea and the first pioneering attempts were made by Dalton, Raynor, Taplin and others. In the face of many difficulties and disappointments these pioneers raised and bred foxes whose progeny may be found to-day in every civilized country of the world.

Prince Edward Island gave birth to the industry and at the present time it is impossible to prophesy the extent to which it may develop.

The silver fox still holds the lead, both as regards numbers and popularity, in the list of fur bearing animals being raised in captivity. The reasons for this are obvious. To a large extent the production of these animals has passed the experimental stage. Satisfactory methods of feeding have been worked out and, when given proper care and attention, a yearly increase averaging from two to five puppies per pair can be looked for.

The market for first-class pelts is unlimited and it is all together unlikely that the supply will ever meet the demand. However, the reader will notice that the previous remarks state that production has passed the experimental, and that the market for first-class pelts is unlimited.

Knowledge Essential.

Like all other branches of animal husbandry, there will be found in the ranks of the silver fox many worthless individuals totally unfit to reproduce their kind from an economic standpoint. It has taken a long time for this fact to penetrate, partly on account of the high prices which have prevailed in the past for anything that looked like a silver, and on the other hand, being a more or less new departure, many of those desiring to purchase breeding stock knew little or nothing regarding the factors which go to make up a quality fox. Unfortunately, many off colored and highly undesirable specimens have been sold and the owner has, and, in some cases still is, laboring under the delusion that he possesses something of value, and sooner or later is bound to find out the bitter truth that his highly prized silvers are not worth in the fur buyer's eyes the price of an ordinary red fox. The average fox can never be worth more than his pelt and this should be always kept in mind when purchasing foundation stock.

There are always a few outstanding individuals in every breed of live stock who contribute to the improvement of the breed and whose descendents carry to a more or less extent the same possibilities, such do, and rightly so, command large sums of money for improving the average quality of a herd or ranch. The general run of silver foxes do not possess this quality, no more than do horses, sheep or cattle, but it is not necessary that every fox should be a world beater to produce a well furred coat of good color that will bring a handsome profit at the fur auction.

With the domestication of the fox and the great possibilities opened up it was natural that the same possibilities should be thought of with other fur bearers. The mink has come under subjection and is being raised in pens. His fur brings good prices and is in constant demand by the fur trade for many uses. It is one of the most attractive furs and the likelihood of the supply ever meeting the demand is far distant.

The Mink.

Mink, like all of the weasel family, are great killers and do so not only for the purpose of securing food but for the pure love of killing. They have an inborn delight in marauding the homes of comparatively harmless creatures and destroying all of them that come within their reach. As might be expected he has carried some of these undesirable traits into domestication but with time and patience he will undoubtedly lose to a great extent his inate ferociousness.

Breeding mink offers many attractive possibilities for the establishment of a mink ranch and is a much less costly proposition than a fox ranch and many find it an interesting and paying hobby to keep a few pair in the back yard. They make very little noise and sanitary conditions are in every way adequate, little or no oder is noticeable.

If one is contemplating going into mink raising they would be well advised to commence off a small scale and with a few pair until they have gained experience with this interesting but somewhat tricky animal. The previous remarks regarding quality in the foundation stock of foxes are equally applicable to the mink. The fine coated black mink brings a top price at the fur auction, while the large, coarse, light-colored individuals are to be avoided.

The Muskrat.

Perhaps there is no fur-bearing animal arousing as much interest at the present time as the muskrat. The much despised rat has risen very quickly in the social scale during the past decade. It is only a few years ago since he was regarded more or les sas a pest and of comparatively little value, but now a great deal of time, money and energy is being devoted to his propogation. The demand for fur coats and fur-trimmed of all kinds, and, for which purpose, the muskrat has been found ideal, consequently, there has been an ever steady rise in the price paid for a good quality of pelts Choice pelts should be of a dark brown color, well furred and with no traces of the light and almost white looking fur seen in many of the cheapest coats. Muskrat can be either bred on dry land or enclosed areas of marsh land, the latter when available will undoubtedly prove to be the most profitable methods. Such land, however, is hard to secure and cannot be picked up as easily as most people imagine. It is absolutely necessary that such land has a sufficient quantity of water covering it to ensure that it will not freeze to the bottom in winter as the muskrat goes under the ice to feed and will quickly become frozen out if there is not at least one to two feet of running water under the ice. It is also highly desirable that there be a quantity of wild rice, bull-rushes, cattails, and all other aquatic plants growing on the property. If a fence is intended to be erected around the swamp or marsh, the question of spring floods and the damage accruing thereto from ice flows in the spring of the year must be carefully considered or else the rancher will be dismayed to find some day that a large part of his fence has been carried away and the consequent escaping of a large number of his muskrats. The prolificness of muskrats in northern climates at least has been considerably exaggerated by over-optimistic prospective ranchers. In all probability the northern rat does not breed more than two or three times at the most in the year with litters ranging from five to eight in number. How many rats can be run to an acre of swamp has not yet been satisfactorily arrived at, but probably the number has been greatly exaggerated, and at the present time from twenty-five to fifty pairs is considered the limit, though only future experimentations along these lines will prove the truth or otherwise of these contentions.

Watch the Enemies.

A sharp look-out must be kept for the natural enemies of the rat. The mink, snapping turtles, hawks, black snakes, otter and other animals prey on the young. These invaders must be kept down or they will raise havoc with the rancher's profits. The raising of pen rats is neither difficult nor impossible and can be accomplished by keeping the muskrat in a dark secluded spot where the light cannot penetrate into the nest of the mother. For the beginner it is best to breed in pairs, removing the male after the mating season and putting them together again about three weeks after the young rats are born. Both males and females have a great tendency to fight and at the present time the opinion seems to be that the muskrat is not polygamous, and it is not safe ot leave three or four females with one male. Until further work has been done to verify these points it will be safer to breed in pairs until different evidense points to the contrary. The muskrat is purely a vegetarian and will eat almost anything green or in the way of vegetables or frain. Carrots, parsnip, corn, rolled oats, green clover hay and all aquatic plants are relished by him.

Other Possibilities.

Beaver can be run in a muskrat swamp and will not bother the inhabitants, and as long as there is a supply of poplar and willows he will take care of himself and breed his own kind. There is not sufficient data considering the pen-raising of beaver to prophecy whether it can be successfully accomplished on a commercial scale or otherwise. Racoon, bears, lynx, fisher, martin can all be raised in captivity, but time will tell whether on a profitable basis or not.

Of late years the breeding of rabbits as the chinchilla, angora, etc., to meet the ever-increasing demand for furs has been attracting a great deal of attention, and undoubtedly will become a large source of supplies for the fur manufacturer. There seems no reason to doubt that the raising of chinchilla rabbits can be made a profitable proposition both for the beautiful pelt and for meat consumption. There are, however, a great many rabbits of very poor quality in the country and every effort should be made to secure first-class specimens to commence breedin goperations.

Revived.

When tea was over at the children's party, the hostess asked the smallest boy if he would say grace.

"What's that?" asked the honored guest.

"Why, don't you know?" said the surprised hostess. "What does your father say when he has had a good dinner?"

The small boy searched his memory, then replied:

"He rubs his chest and says: 'Richard is himself again!' "

"Where did you get that fine new hat?" "I bought it ten years ago. Seven years ago I had it newly pressed. Three years ago it was dyed black. The year before last I had a new band put around it. Last week I exchanged it at a restaurant."

The Art of Making Tea

What to Do and What Not to Do to Get the Best Results

Mr. Spalding Black, on the staff of the Salada Tea Company, recently prepared an interesting leaflet entitled "The Art of Correct Tea Making." Approximately 26,000,000 cups of tea are consumed every day in Canada, and yet it is doubtful if one-tenth of this number is prepared with the necessary care to bring out the full flavor of the tea leaf so that this stimulating and refreshing drink may be thoroughly enjoyed. The following is from "The Art of Correct Tea Making":

"Tea is one of the kindliest blessings of Nature. In its comforting indulgence one can lose the worries of the day and forget the fatigue of effort.

"The full joy of a cup of this gracious beverage can only be reached when fine quality tea is used and ceremonial care exercised in its preparation, to draw from each tiny leaf the essence of flavor and refreshment with which it has been endowed by Nature.

How to Prepare Tea

"In the countries of the East, where the drinking of tea has been enjoyed for a thousand years or more, the subject of preparing the leaf for consumption has become a fine art and a ceremony, but the full, delicious refreshment and healthful stimulation may be extracted from the fragrant tea-leaves, if the following rules are followed exactly:—

"Rule No. 1—The best quality of tea must be used. The tea also must be fresh, to yield the full goodness.

"Rule No. 2—The quality of the water used will affect the flavor of the beverage in the cup. Draw fresh cold water and bring it to a hard 'bubbly' boil. Never use water that has been boiled before. Sometimes chlorine put in water to purify it will completely change the flavor of the tea. The water is to blame, however, and not the tea.

"Rule No. 3—It is proper that only a crockery or china teapot be used, never one of metal or any other substance if the pure and delicious flavor of the tea is to be drawn forth. Tea likewise should never be enclosed in a metal tea-ball.

"Rule No. 4—The teapot must be scalded out with boiling water and while it is warm, place in it one level teaspoonful of tea for each cup required.

"Rule No. 5—Now pour the boiling water on the leaves. Allow to steep in a warm place for five minutes. Stir just sufficiently to diffuse the full strength of the tea. Then pour the liquid off the leaves into another heated vessel, unless served immediately. If poured off in this way, the tea will not take on a bitter taste, which even the finest tea will do unless prevented from over-steeping. Tea made according to these rules will be fragrant, delicious and completely satisfying."

The Plowman

The delicate green trees stand up
There by the fenced ways;
One or two are crimson-tipped
And soon wil start to blaze.

The plowman follows, as of yore,
Along the furrows cold,
Homeric shape against the boughs;;
Sharp is the air with mold. . . .

Oh, new days, yet long known and old!
Lo, as we look about,
This immemorial act of faith,
That takes the heart from doubt!

Kingdoms decay and creeds are not,
Yet still the plowman goes
Down the spring fields, so he may make
Ready for him that sows.

—Lizette Woodworth Reese, in "The Wayside Lute."

A doctor was finishing his round of the links when his small Negro caddie remarked: "Doctor, ain't you got some shoes up yonder in yo' locker you don't want. I needs some bad." "Perhaps," said the doctor. "What size do you wear?" "I dunno, sah," 'cause I ain't never bought none dat-er-way—I either kin git in 'em or I can't."

Sunday School Lesson

August 14. Lesson VII.—David Brings the Ark To Jerusalem, 2 Sam. 2: 3, 4; 5: 1-3; 6: 12-15. Golden Text—We shall e satisfied with the goodness of thy house, even of thy holy temple—Psalm 65: 4.

ANALYSIS.

I. DAVID'S SEVEN YEARS' REIGN IN HEBRON, 2 Sam. 2:1-4; 5:1-5.

II. THE BRINGING OF THE ARK INTO JERUSALEM, 2 Sam. 6:1-15.

III. THE ENTRANCE OF THE KING OF GLORY, Psalm 24.

INTRODUCTION—The ark was a simple chest of acacia wood (Deut. 10:3), made by Moses while at Sinai, and containing the two "tables of stone," upon which was written his first short code of laws, the decalogue, or ten commandments. See Exod. 24:12; 31:18; 32:15-16; 34:1; Deut. 4:13; 5:22; 10:1-5. These laws, with probably some additions, were the basis of the national covenant made at Sinai, where, in response to the promises of Jehovah brought to them by Moses, the people of Israel promised to obey them, Exod. 24:3-8. Hence the ark is spoken of in the Old Testament as the "ark of Jehovah," the "ark of God," the "ark of the covenant," and the "ark of the testimony." It was held in high reverence by the Israelite people, as a sort of portable shrine, signifying to them the very presence of God. For their God, Jehovah, was not like the Baal gods, confined to one district or to one sanctuary, but was able to go with his people, to protect and to guide them, in all places. Hence on their wilderness journeys the ark went before them, Num. 10:33. It was borne before them when they crossed the Jordan (Josh. ch. 3), and when they compassed the walled city of Jericho. It was in the temple at Shiloh in the days of Eli and Samuel, 1 Sam. 3:3. Captured by the Philistines in battle, it was sent back by them when their country was ravaged by a plague, which they believed to be inflicted upon them by the God of Israel. At a little town among the hills of Judah it had remained for a long time, for the sanctuary at Shiloh had been destroyed. David now desires to bring it into his newly acquired capital city of Jerusalem.

I. DAVID'S SEVEN YEARS' REIGN IN HEBRON, 2 Sam. 2:1-4; 5:1-5.

Saul had fought his last fight. The Philistines had beaten him in Mount Gilboa, and he and his three sons were slain. Of them David wrote:

Thy glory, O Israel, is slain upon thy high places.
How are the mighty fallen! (See 2 Sam. 1:19, Rev. Ver.).

David's hour had come, the hour for which he had waited since that strange scene at his father's house in Bethlehem, when he had been called in from the sheepfolds to be designated and anointed by the prophet Samuel to be Israel's future king. While Saul lived he was loyal to him, though suspected and hunted by him. Now that Saul was dead his time for action had come. But first he enquired of the Lord. This inquiry, according to the custom of the time, was made through the priest Abiahar, who had been with him in his wanderings (compare 1 Samuel 30:7-8). The answer of the Lord was "Go up unto Hebron."

Hebron was centrally situated in the territory of Judah, in the southern part of western Palestine. It was closely connected with the great traditions of Israel, for near Hebron Abraham had dwelt and there he and his wife Sarah were buried. While a fugitive David had spent much of his time in that part and had many friends there. "And the men of Judah came and there they anointed David king over the house of Judah." Abner, Saul's cousin and captain of his army, took one of the sons of Saul and made him king over the other tribes of Israel with his capital at Mahanaim, east of Jordan, 2:8, 9.

Seven years passed by with occasional strife between David and his rival at Mahanaim. David's power and fame increased, but that of the son of Saul grew weaker. Then Abner went over to make peace with David and was treacherously murdered by Joab, David's nephew and commander of his army, whose younger brother he had killed in battle. Ishbosheth himself was murdered by two of his captains. David, while serving under Saul, had become widely and favorably known to all the men of Israel, and they now came and asked him to be their ruler. With the elders of Israel who came he made a league, or covenant, no doubt binding himself to rule according to the laws and to respect the ancient rights and liberties of the people. The subsequent history shows that David was true to his covenant agreement and bond.

The date of David's reign cannot be exactly given, but it was approximately B.C. 1010 to 970.

II. THE BRINGING OF THE ARK INTO JERUSALEM, 2 Sam. 6:1-15.

Jerusalem was up to this time a Canaanite town, occupied by the tribe of the Jebusites. It was a very ancient town and strongly situated and fortified. So confident were its inhabitants in its military strength that they boasted that the blind and the lame could hold it against assault. But David took this stronghold, rebuilt and extended its walls and towers, and made it his capital city. Now he sought to establish within the city a sanctuary for the worship of Jehovah, believing that walls and towers alone could not make the place great or secure.

The king and a great company of men went up to (not from, see 1 Chron. 13:6) Baale-Judah (that is Kirjath-jearim) to bring the ark of God. A great procession was formed, with the music of many instruments and the ark borne upon a new cart drawn by oxen. Sudden tragedy intervened and Uzzah, one of the drivers, son of the man in whose house the ark had remained for many years, fell dead. In some way, difficult for us to understand, he had transgressed the law which invested the ark with peculiar sanctity, and was punished, so the writer of this story and the people of his time believed, for his rashness. The interrupted journey was resumed three months later and the ark was brought into the city with shouting and with the sound of the trumpet. There it was placed in a tent until a suitable temple could be built to receive it.

III. THE ENTRANCE OF THE KING OF GLORY, Psalm 24.

This psalm was composed either by David himself or by some later poet in celebration of this great and significant event. The sacredness of the hill of the Lord is but symbolic of the sacredness of the whole earth which is his. The character of those who are fit to ascend into and dwell in his sanctuary is the ideal for all men. The ancient gates of the city are bidden to open and admit the Lord of hosts, the King of glory, who will make his dwelling there. Compare Psalm 118:19-20.

Shells

Did you ever find a nice shiny shell along a lake or stream? This was a dead shell. The chances are that a muskrat had dug it out of the ground, eaten the animal which lived in the shell, and then thrown the shell away. But no matter where you live, you can most likely find living shells if you know how to look for them.

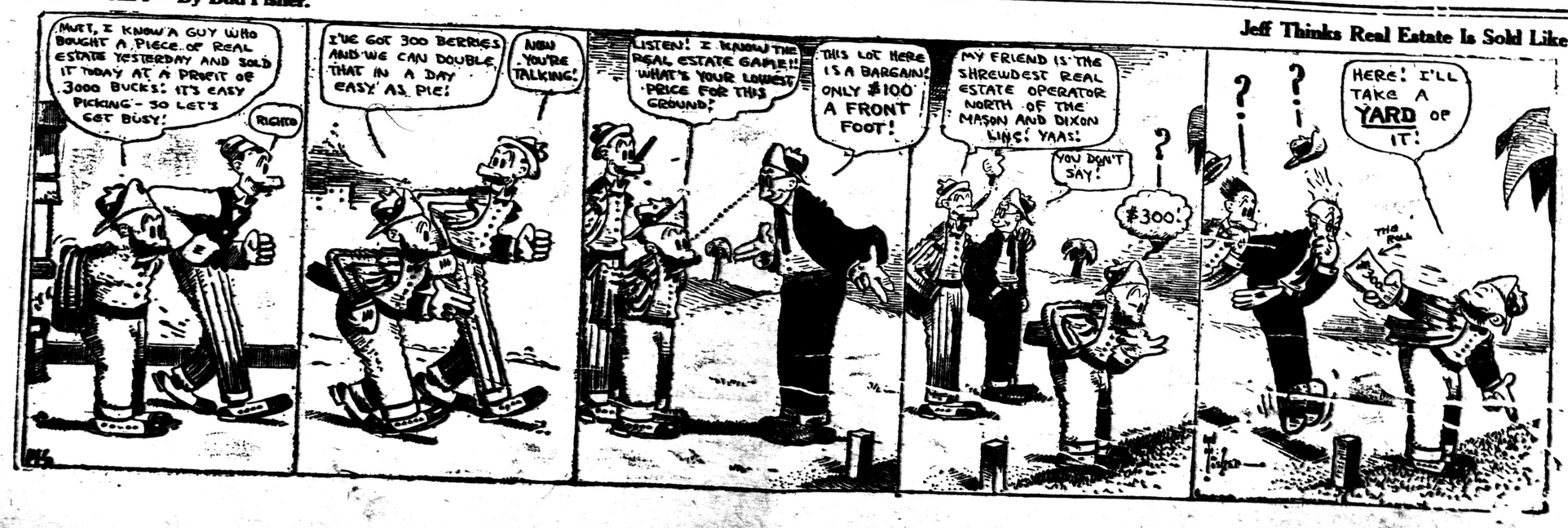
Shell life is sure to be near a body of water, whether pond, lake, seashore, creek or river. Turn over stones, logs, sticks and the like, lying near the water, and you will be sure to find living shells. They usually appear as little black objects sticking out of the sand or gravel. Pick them up and you will see that they are living.

Along the seashore, millions of seashells can sometimes be seen washed up by the waves. These shells do not stay long on the beach, but crawl into the ground. If you watch closely you can see a little living hand squeeze through the opening in the shell and then dig into the sand. It is remarkable how fast the shell will disappear.

There are so many different varieties of shells that a collection makes quite a museum. I know a man who has several hundred gathered from near the creeks and lakes surrounding his home.

To clean shells for a museum collection, put them in boiling water for a few seconds—not longer than a minute at the most. This will cook the animal so that you can pull it out with a pair of tweezers. Bivalves, such as mussels, will gape after they are in the hot water a few seconds, so that all you have to do is cut out the muscles and flesh. After entirely removing the animal and all soft tissue, let the shells dry for at least a week. Then label each with a small sticked, stating where and when it was found and, if possible, the name. If you can't find the name in any encyclopedia, your science teacher in high school will be glad to tell you.—W. P. M.

I now know why the witches were persecuted and hanged by upright and godly people.—William Allen White.

MUTT AND JEFF—By Bud Fisher.

Jeff Thinks Real Estate Is Sold Like Muslin.