

## THERE IS MONEY IN FOX FARMING

Industry Is Rapidly Gaining Favor in Several of Northern States of Country.

### MANY ANIMALS IN CAPTIVITY

Best Location for Farm Is Where Winters Are Cold and Opportunity Offered to Develop Fur—Big Price for Pelts.

(Prepared by the United States Department of Agriculture.)

Fox farming is fast gaining favor in the United States. The industry, barely known a decade ago, is fairly common in some states of the northern tier, is represented in all states in this tier and in that next to it, and is growing rapidly. There is money in it for the raiser who starts modestly, learns the business, and then expands his holdings. There are losses in store for the type who starts with a big ranch, no knowledge of the business, and only a desire for quick profits. At the present time the industry is undergoing a process of stabilization. Most fox farmers raise animals for breeding purposes, and comparatively few have adjusted the business to a pelt basis. All told, there are between 10,000 and 15,000 silver foxes being grown in captivity on American fox farms at this time.

#### Many Animals in Canada.

Such are some of the conclusions of a representative of the biological survey, United States Department of Agriculture, who has just returned to Washington after an extensive investigation of American fox farms and



A Silver Fox.

the methods of their operation. In Canada, where the industry originated, and especially on Prince Edward Island, where there are approximately 15,000 foxes in captivity, fox farming is conducted on a much more extensive scale than in the United States. Its promise of good financial returns to those willing to master its problems, give indication that within a comparatively short time in this country it will rival in proportions the industry in Canada.

The best location for a fox farm is where the winters are cold and the fox may have opportunity to develop fur in keeping with the needs of the climate. The industry is thus confined by climatic conditions to the northern states. There the raising of foxes for breeding and for the fur markets flourishes. Most of the foxes raised in captivity are on farms, or "ranches," with pens for from 25 to 50 pairs, although in occasional instances the ranches are much larger, containing pens for as many as 150 pairs.

The foxes generally breed in January and February and the young are born within 52 days. A pair of foxes raises one family a year, the number of young varying from one to ten, though rarely exceeding five or six. Most of the fox raiser's troubles come when the young are a few weeks old and are peculiarly susceptible to attacks from worms. Great care is necessary to carry the young foxes through this period.

#### Most Foxes Sold for Breeding.

It is not advisable to kill a fox for the pelt before 18 months of age for at that time its fur is more valuable than at a younger age. Comparatively few of the foxes raised on American ranches are sold at the present time, however, for their pelts. Most of the ranchmen obtain higher values than the worth of the pelt by selling the live animals for breeding purposes. A good pelt may fetch as much as \$500, though the average is much lower, approximating \$250 to \$350. The furs are comparatively little known because of their rarity. Silver foxes vary from those in which the color is entirely silver to those in which it is entirely black except for some white-banded hairs on the back and rump. In the black fox the white is absent from all parts except the tip of the tail, which is generally white in all phases of the animal.

#### PROVIDE DUCKS WITH WATER

Where Supply Is Lacking Fowls Gum Up About Eyes, Become Listless and Die.

A duck must have water about its head and eyes daily or it will not thrive. However, if a tank of sufficient depth is provided for the ducks, to

sink their heads in the water clear out of sight when they drink, then they can do without a pond or stream of running water. When they have no water at all, ducks often gum up about the eyes, become listless, sit about, don't eat and soon die.

#### BUTTONS SERVE AS TRIMMING

Demand Is Heavy for New Idea in Decoration for Gowns; Wonderful Effects Obtained.

In recent years we have heard and seen little of buttons. Their use has been confined to utilitarian purposes. Now, observes a fashion writer, makers are exploiting them as trimming. Wonderful effects can be obtained through buttons, and when the attention of the fashionably dressed is turned toward them a great demand is created which gives designers in this field an incentive to work out new effects.

No doubt, the recent vogue for enameled novelties is accountable for the beautiful enameled buttons that ornament many of the new model

gowns. Entire girdles are made of buttons that are either painted or enameled.

For suits velours de laine, serge, broadcloth and gabardine are favorite materials. Maroon or chestnut brown is exceedingly popular. Of course, there is the sober black suit, but this often is enlivened by a bit of color in the form of embroidery or narrow trimming bands of a contrasting bright colored material. Dark blue, gray and beige are close seconds to brown. Waistlines of suit coats are long and sleeves are wide. Monkey fur still plays its part—and an important part it is, too—as a trimming for suits as well as other garments.

#### ADVERTISING FARM PRODUCTS

Where Automobiles Pass Farms It Is Good Idea to Post Bulletin Offering Produce.

Do the autos pass your door? Why not put up a bulletin at the front gate and let folks know that you have some nice butter, honey, eggs, chickens, fresh pork, potatoes or other things for sale? The auto folks will pay better than retail prices for high class goods.

## FEEDING CATTLE IS GOOD PLAN FOR MARKETING VARIOUS CROPS



Summer Fattening in Corn Belt on

(Prepared by the United States Department of Agriculture.)

Although corn belt cattle feeders have lost money the last two years, yet on the average for five years or more the industry has been profitable on many farms and is a line of production which will continue to be an important branch of American agriculture.

The bureau of animal industry, United States Department of Agriculture, has recently issued Farmer's Bulletin No. 1218, "Beef Production in the Corn Belt," which contains valuable suggestions to the corn belt feeders on the economical production of beef.

The investigations on which the bulletin is based were conducted by the department on 906 farms of the corn belt and every phase of the problem, from raising calves or buying feeders to the marketing of the finished steer, is treated in considerable detail.

The general tendency in the corn belt to plow up permanent pastures and produce more cultivated crops caused a decline in beef raising, but the keeping of cows to raise calves has continued to be profitable on land too rough, too wet, or too infertile for cultivation. The reduction of pasture has been compensated for to some extent by the greater use of clover, alfalfa, and corn silage. However, since 1905 there has been some increase in feeder production in the corn belt due to the breaking up of western ranges for dry farming and irrigation.

The investigation, which was carried on for three years, showed that the feed cost of keeping a cow was 69 per cent of the entire cost of maintenance for a year, while 31 per cent represented interest, labor, equipment and incidentals. The total number of cows on the 906 farms was 23,258, an average of 25 to the farm. The per cent of calves raised was practically 85. It was found that costs could be reduced through three factors—increasing the credits from the cows, improving the herd, and economy in feeding.

**Early Fall Buying of Feeders Best.**  
When feeders are not raised on the farm buying and selling ability plays an important part. In some seasons certain weights and classes of cattle may be purchased more economically than others. Ordinarily early fall buying is preferable, as competition between packers and feeders usually increases as winter approaches.

The higher the quality of the feeder steer the better use he will make of his feed, though he usually eats more of it. But this consideration should not cause the buyer to lose sight of the price. Fleshy feeders can often be used to advantage on short feeds, and when there are very good prospects for higher prices. The older the animal the quicker it will fatten, as it will use less feed for growth and more for fat production.

Mature feeders fatten in three to four months, two-year-olds in 5 to 7 months, yearlings in eight to ten months, and calves in ten to twelve months. Older cattle use roughages more advantageously, but in general young animals make more economical use of all feeds. Mature cattle require from nine to eleven pounds of digestible nutrients to make a pound of gain, whereas yearlings use six to eight pounds, and calves only four to six pounds.

Feeding cattle for the market is simply one method of marketing the crops. On 287 farms in the corn belt an average of 35 per cent of the 1919 crops was fed to cattle. Fully 90 per cent of the fattened cattle in this area are dry-lot fed and are marketed before July 1. The various methods of feeding and the feeds used are fully discussed in the bulletin.

**Feed Alfalfa and Clover Hay.**  
Alfalfa and clover hay are by far the most popular dry roughages, as they take the place of commercial protein concentrates to a large extent. Grass hays, with the exception of timothy mixed with clover, are very little used. The use of stovers and straws has a direct bearing on the economy of gains, and all such feeds should be used on the farm.

The most popular protein concentrates in the corn belt are cottonseed meal and cake and linseed meal. Corn, oats, and barley are the carbohydrate concentrates most used. Molasses

feed and other miscellaneous concentrates are in much demand in some sections. Supplying protein is of more concern to the cattle feeder than supplying the other constituents of the ration because it is usually purchased.

Cottonseed meal, while it is used more extensively throughout the corn belt as a whole, is no more popular than linseed meal. Most cattle feeders prefer linseed meal, but it is not used so largely owing to its somewhat higher cost. Corn makes up 90 per cent of the carbohydrate concentrates. Oats are frequently used in the latter part of the feeding period to put cattle in better shipping condition.

tion. Barley is used only in a small way, although in Illinois it made up 10 per cent of the grain ration.

**Purchase Price Is Half of Cost.**  
In fattening a steer the combined operating expenses usually more than equal the original purchase price of the feeder. The factors considered in operating expenses are feed, labor, building and equipment, interest, marketing, insurance and taxes. Feed usually constitutes about 80 per cent of this expense. All the other items are generally balanced by the manure and pork credits.

The preceding paragraphs are a very brief outline of the investigation of beef production in the corn belt. Those interested in a thorough study of the various operations and cost figures should secure a copy of the bulletin, which can be obtained free from the department of agriculture.

**If He Did.**  
"On the Pacific coast," said the traveler, "we go out in boats, and nothing less than a 100-pound fish is considered sport." "Sense me," said the colored man. "Yo' say yo' fish for 100-pound fish?" "Why, certainly we do." "Ain't yo' skeered yo' right catch one?"

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