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SEASONAL FOX RATIONS AND QUANTITIES TO FEED

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Fox rations should be varied during certain seasons of the year. In spring, when the vixen is suckling her litter, she needs a greater variety and quantity of easily digested food than in summer. Following weaning, the nutritional requirements of the growing pup differ from those of the adult that is to be pelted.

The results of experiments have definitely demonstrated the ability of adult foxes to maintain themselves in apparently excellent health during late spring, summer, and early fall on rations containing little or no raw meat. Because of the cost, it is an economically sound practice not to feed raw meat when it can be omitted from the ration without detrimental results.

Raw meat should consist of 70 or 75 percent red-muscle meat (horse or beef) and 25 or 30 percent viscera. The viscera may consist of any one or all of the following: Lungs, udders, tripe, milts or spleens, kidneys, livers, hearts, and brains. Viscera included in the breeding ration should consist predominantly of the four last-named organs. Tripe, udders, and lungs can be used more advantageously in the ration of animals that are intended for pelting. In mid-September the red-muscle meat portion of the pelted's ration should be reduced by one-half or three-fourths and replaced by tripe, udders, and lungs. The experimental fox rations listed in table 1 have given satisfactory results over a period of several years.

The suggested quantities to be fed are only approximate and should be adjusted to the individual appetite. If two or more animals are penned together, a little more than twice as much food will be required as that shown since the figures given indicate the food consumption by animals confined in individual pens. All animals except vixens suckling litters should be fed once daily, in the evening.

TABLE 1.--Composition of rations suitable for feeding foxes during the breeding season and in summer and fall

Ingredients	Breeding season <u>1/</u>		Summer and fall				
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent
Raw meat.	40.0	20.0	. . .	. . .	. . .	10.0	. . .
Beefmeal. . . . .	. . .	2.4	9.6	4.8	12.0	. . .	4.8
Livermeal . . . . .	. . .	1.2	2.4	2.4	. . .	2.0	2.4
Tankage . . . . .	. . .	. . .	. . .	. . .	. . .	8.0	. . .
Soybean oilmeal . . .	. . .	2.4	. . .	4.8	. . .	. . .	. . .
Peanutmeal. . . . .	. . .	. . .	. . .	. . .	. . .	. . .	4.8
Codliver oil.	1.0	1.0	. . .	. . .	. . .	. . .	. . .
Dry mixture No.7 <u>2/</u> .	. . .	. . .	25.0	25.0	25.0	25.0	25.0
Dry mixture No.9 <u>2/</u> .	25.0	25.0	. . .	. . .	. . .	. . .	. . .
Ground green bone . .	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0
Tomatoes.	5.0	5.0	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5
Carrots	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5
Water	21.5	35.5	53.0	53.0	53.0	45.0	53.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

1/ Rations 1 and 2 are being given experimental study.
2/ See table 2.

TABLE 2.--Composition of dry mixtures used in table 1

Ingredient	No. 7	No. 9	Ingredient	No. 7	No. 9
	Pounds	Pounds		Pounds	Pounds
Breadmeal.	150	100	Skim-milk powder. . .	. . .	50
Oatmeal.	150	100	Linseed oilmeal . . .	. . .	25
Wheat-germ meal. . . .	50	100	Wheat bran. . . . .	. . .	25
Fishmeal (vacuum dried)	100	100	Yeast (inactive). . .	. . .	25
Alfalfa leafmeal . . .	50	50	Total.	500	575

Adult Males

Either ration 1 or 2 of table 1 can be satisfactorily used in feeding adult males during the breeding season (January 1 to April 1), allowing about 0.9 pound per fox per day. During the remainder of the year any one of rations 3, 4, 5, 6, or 7 can be fed, allowing 0.85 pound per day until September 15, when the quantity should be increased to 0.9 pound.

Adult Vixens

Adult vixens can be fed rations 3, 4, 5, 6, or 7 from the time their litters are weaned until the end of December, allowing 0.8 pound per day from mid-June to mid-September, when the quantity should be increased to 0.85 pound.

Either ration 1 or 2 should prove satisfactory in feeding adult vixens during the breeding, gestation, and suckling periods. Allow 0.85 to 0.9 pound per vixen until 2 or 3 days prior to whelping, when the quantity should be somewhat reduced. Four days after whelping begin feeding twice daily, gradually increasing the food allowed. When pups are 3 to 3-1/2 weeks old, the vixen and her litter should be receiving as much food twice daily as will be consumed in a reasonable length of time.

Weaned Pups

Weaned fox pups should be continued on rations containing some raw meat (rations 1 or 2) until the last of July or the first of August, after which they can be switched to ration 3, 4, 5, 6, or 7, allowing 1.0 pound per pup per day until mid-September. From then until pelting time the quantity allowed should be increased to 1.1 pound for female pups and 1.2 pound for male pups, depending upon the appetite.

