

**A TREATISE  
ON  
SILVER FOX  
FARMING**

**PRICE \$1.50**

**FRANK F. TUPLIN**  
R. F. D. NO. 1, ALPINE, MICHIGAN



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Mr. Frank F. Tuplin

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# MR. FRANK F. TUPLIN

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Mr. Frank F. Tuplin procured his first pair of Silver Foxes in the year 1905. Now his name ranks among the highest of those connected with the fur farming industry, and the foxes bred by him are considered among the purest strains in Canada and the United States.

Mr. Tuplin was born at New Annan, Prince Edward Island, Canada. In his early days he was engaged in mixed farming, at which he achieved a fair measure of success. But, not satisfied with his achievements and learning of the potential profits to be derived from Silver Fox Farming, he borrowed \$1,000.00, which he invested in foxes. He possesses in a marked degree the qualities that make for an ultimate success, and, although acquiring but little during the first two years in business except in the nature of experience which made him a subject of much ridicule to his friends and neighbors, he stuck to his new undertaking, confident that he would win out in the end.

His ambition was to make \$10,000.00, which he achieved in 1910, when he broke the combine existing among foxmen, and made the first public sale. In 1912 the proceeds from stock raised and bred by Mr. Tuplin netted him \$250,000.00, and since that time he has sold a great many pairs of foxes for breeding purposes, placed many pelts on the market, and so extended his business that today his name is connected with a chain of fox farms, of which he is almost the sole owner, extending from Prince Edward Island, Canada, thru Alpine, Lakewood and Traverse City, Michigan, to Houghton on the far off shores of Lake Superior. He is also instrumental in making Michigan the center of the fox industry in the United States. The mere fact that Mr. Tuplin has built up such a stupendous business is proof of his remarkable foresight and initiative in coping with new conditions, and his achievements are due not only to the kind of stock he carries, which is only the best, but also because he takes a pride in transmitting the knowledge he has gained from wide experience to beginners learning the business under his supervision.

—EDITOR.

# Origin of the Silver Black Fox Industry

When Cartier first landed on the shores of Canada and was shown as a guest thru the Indian village of Hochelaga, the abundance of furs that was everywhere in evidence caused him to see the wonderful opportunities open to those who might some day engage in trading with the Indians, offering the wares and necessities of civilized Europe to the savages in exchange for the vastly more expensive, but unappreciated products of the wilds of America.

Later he made it known to his fellow countrymen across the seas that that country was abounding in fur bearing animals of all kinds, and since then men have ventured on ocean voyages to barter with the Indians, they have endured the hardships of the northern winters to trap the crafty animals in their native haunts far from civilization, they have vied with each other to the point of lawlessness and bloodshed for the control of the most productive districts, all that they might share in the immense profits to be derived from participation in the fur trade.

The Hudson Bay Company, the oldest and most powerful trading company in the British Empire and possibly in the world, made millionaires of many of its members thru dealing in fur alone. Now while all kinds yielded large returns, it did not take them long to distinguish between the poorer class and the most expensive of their products. The highest-priced fur and most widely sought after then, as today, was the incomparable Silver Black Fox.

Now on Prince Edward Island, the smallest province of Canada, as everywhere else in the north, there were hunters, trappers and fur traders. The place being small and possessing no large forests, the largest game the woods afforded there was the fox. Naturally then, while sportsmen in the other provinces went after moose, deer, bear, etc., the island men hunted foxes. For this reason every silver fox as soon as discovered was run to earth and "bagged." Consequently, the silver fox craze received greater stimulus here than elsewhere.

The idea was then conceived of placing a pair of these "sports," for they are simply an accidental variation of the red fox in the wild, in an enclosure to determine if it were not possible to so breed them that their offspring would run true to color.

Benjamin Haywood, in 1879, at the suggestion of D. H. MacGowan, purchased for about \$25.00 a pair of silver fox pups that had been taken from dens in the woods and placed them in an enclosure surrounded by a high board wall. These foxes were a great novelty and many people came to see them. Thru lack of knowl-

ledge concerning the habits of these animals there were no restrictions placed upon the privileges of the public, and people were admitted at all times of the year to see these curiosities. As a result, during the breeding season when all should be as quiet as possible, the foxes were being continually excited and annoyed and the undertaking ended only in failure. About two years later Mr. Haywood killed what foxes he had and gave up the idea of fox farming.

However, the suggestion had been made, and while the attempts of one had produced no good results, success offered such alluring prospects that the enthusiasm of all could not be dampened by the inability of one man to meet the demands of the situation, and we find others taking up the experiments confident of success as the outcome of the venture.

In 1887, Charles Dalton (now Sir Chas.), a great sportsman and a man of considerable executive ability, began experimenting in a small way with some red foxes kept in cages in the barn. Little was accomplished, but practically no outlay was involved.

About the same time Robert Oulton, a man of great initiative, but probably lacking the financial support to risk much in extended efforts, was giving his attention to some silver foxes on Anticosti Island, where they had been purchased from a trapper. This island is situated in the Gulf of St. Lawrence about 300 miles from Prince Edward Island.

Dalton also believed that silver foxes were the "big game" and he, too, got a pair in Anticosti Island in 1889. These foxes proved to be of very poor quality and were later killed.

In 1892, Dalton learned that some silver fox pups had been dug out of the ground in Lot 40, P. E. I. He decided to obtain them, which he did, so reports go, in exchange for an old sleigh and a poor cow. These were light silvers and proved to be the real starting point of the industry.

Sometime during the next year he purchased another pair of silver pups which had been taken from their dens near Bedeque, P. E. I. These foxes were all kept in a barn at Nail Pond, where Mr. Dalton then lived.

It might be added that up to this time not a single litter of young foxes had been reared to maturity, either by Mr. Dalton or Mr. Oulton.

In 1894 Oulton built the first wire enclosure, such as is universally used today, in a thick grove of mixed wood on Oulton's Island and made this artificial home resemble, as nearly as possible, their habitations in the wild.

Here at last we can record success, and let us attribute credit to those to whom it is justly due, for after the first year with this new arrangement Oulton succeeded in raising foxes every season.

As I said before Oulton was full of ingenious schemes, while Dalton had a head for business. Now, as they were alone in the world in their line, with common aims and one project in view, and as one possessed the qualities that were lacking in the other, it was only natural and fitting that they should form a partnership. This they did in 1895, and from that time on the industry prospered.

Now altho the business was far from perfect, in fact, was just getting started, Robert Tuplin, a neighbor and friend of Dalton and Oulton, knowing a little of what was going on, readily concluded that the business must be a profitable one. He became at first interested and then anxious to get into it, but had the necessary capital. However, he got a friend, Mr. Gordon, interested, who agreed to finance the undertaking if Mr. Tuplin could buy the foxes. In 1899 these men formed a partnership and purchased their first pair of foxes.

A short time after, 1905, the writer who had been following the work of these men with great interest from the beginning, and had been experimenting with red foxes for four or five years before, bought a pair of the silver foxes thru his uncle, Robert Tuplin.

The Rayners and Harry Lewis also invested in this novel enterprise a little later.

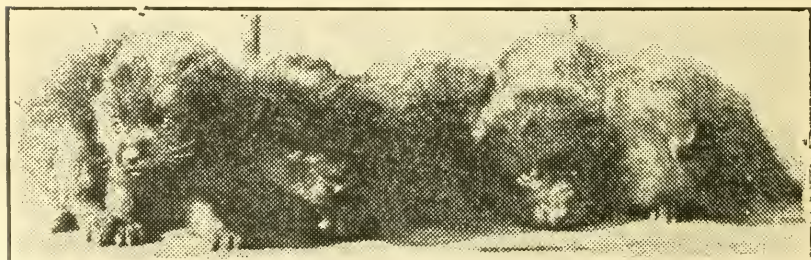
All of these men above mentioned must be regarded as pioneers of the fur industry, as all have contributed largely, thru experiments and new ideas in the early days of the business, toward establishing the present scientific basis on which our foxes are bred and raised with success.

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## MY ENTRY INTO THE SILVER FOX INDUSTRY

As far back as 1899, I remember seeing one pair of silver foxes in an enclosure, and I thought, knowing something of their great value, if they would only produce offspring of their own color, some day this old world of ours will get the surprise of its life.

The following year I made it my business to again visit those foxes and to my amazement saw four little black puppies beside their





parents. Then I became interested and inquisitive as well, asking many questions concerning habits, feeding, breeding, etc. I had the fox fever for sure, and on my return home bought some red fox pups that had been dug out of their dens in the woods and raised them in a pen behind the barn.

I had read much about the trapping of foxes in the north and the great wealth of the Hudson Bay Company, and having often wished that I might become engaged in some way in the fur industry, the sight of the little silver foxes that I had seen was almost too wonderful to believe, for it meant that I had an opportunity to participate in the fur trade with the most valuable furs in the world, and without suffering the terrible privations of a northern climate.

I was then farming 125 acres of land, and it necessitated a great



deal of hard work and economy on the part of my wife and myself to raise our family and get all the necessities of life, and I was indeed on the alert for any honest means to improve our circumstances. So when I found that the extremely rare and costly silver fox was being raised in captivity, I determined to find out as much as possible about them and to get into business for myself. I visited the foxes each year, and each year saw their numbers steadily increasing.

While sitting in the house one day talking the business over with my uncle, who by the way, was one of the men in the partnership from whom I purchased my first foxes, he handed me his book of accounts saying: "Look this over and you will be surprised to learn

what a business I possess." I eagerly examined its pages, and portrayed before my eyes were figures which astonished me and easily surpassed my fondest dreams. There I saw how he had purchased his first pair of foxes; what the ranch had cost; how many skins were shipped to the fur markets; prices received, and how quickly they had paid the initial expenses. I was then thoroughly convinced that I was only wasting valuable time at my present occupation, and decided to get into this new enterprise as soon as possible.

Now in those days the fox business was a secret one, well cornered, and owned by the chosen few. When I found the price quoted me was \$1,000.00 per pair I determined to buy, as I realized that I would be fortunate to get started at all. And so it happened that I arrived home on the first of December, 1905, with my much prized pair, having built my wire pen some time previously.

I believed I had invested in a good thing, but still not realizing the possibilities of the business I had become engaged in, set my standard at \$10,000.00, which amount I believed I could make selling skins and then retire, as \$10,000.00 seemed quite a fortune to one accustomed to counting small money.

My neighbors, good honest people, who believed no one could earn a living except he work from sun to sun, gave each other many a wink and I became the subject of many remarks, which were not at all flattering. But despite their ridicule I determined to keep on knowing that some day the laugh would be on them. Twice each day I fed and watered my foxes thru the heat of summer and the cold of winter, but for two long years without any increase, due no doubt to lack of experience in this work. Again I waited, and this time in the month of April, 1908, I was rewarded by seeing the mother bring out four little black pups. Perhaps I was not the happiest man alive! By fall these little foxes had grown as large as their parents and I found that I had one male and three females in the litter.

About October I paired off the old breeders for another year and got the loan of a male from the man from whom I purchased my foxes to put with the young females. The next spring I had sixteen pups. After adding what I already had I found that I had 22 black and silver foxes and was well on the road to wealth.

During the succeeding years I did equally well. I built new pens enlarging my ranch yearly until the time should come when the world would get wise and demand a share in the profits of our business. I also constructed a kennel of my own design, which I found to give excellent results, becoming much sought after, and worth many thousands of dollars.

Now my wife was very much opposed to my going into the business, while I believed, as I said before, I could make \$10,000.00 selling skins, as that amount seemed quite a fortune to me then,

and I made it the height of my ambition. But since that time I have learned that well-established fox men talk in thousands just as off-hand as farmers talk in dollars and cents when selling their produce. But how short-sighted is man!

I will now tell you in detail, a little of what did really happen. The pelt taken from the first fox I killed was sold to a local buyer in 1909 for \$800.00, and he resold it in London, Eng., for \$1,503.50. Another was sold for \$1,000.00 and others for \$500.00. A lady bought one of my puppies taken from a litter of seven for \$1,000.00 and when she had gone I thought: "One is gone, and there are six still remaining; why I have \$7,000.00 in this litter alone."

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### COMBINE IS BROKEN

After I had been operating my ranch for about five years, during which time I had kept everything in connection therewith a close secret, a certain prominent business man from my nearest town representing a large mercantile concern, called at my home and prevailed upon me to show him thru my ranch. I had then a large ranch filled with foxes, as I had anticipated such an event to take place sooner or later. Selling foxes for breeding purposes would give us still higher prices than by selling the skins, as no man will sell foxes for less than the skins will bring on the market and for obvious reasons will ask considerably more. My guest was amazed at seeing such a large number of foxes in captivity, and remarked on the large fortune I had at my command within the four walls of my enclosure. I was gratified to learn a few days later that he had decided to purchase two pairs of young foxes with the understanding that I would put in one pair with him, making in all a three-pair deal. It was also agreed that I was to get the best young fox raised from the three pairs for the care of the foxes for one year, and one-third of the offspring as my share of the increase. After thinking the matter over I had decided to ask him \$10,000.00 for the two pairs. \$5,000.00 per pair was not too much, as each pair was likely to have about five puppies in the spring, each puppy worth \$1,000.00. The man agreed to take them at this price and we forthwith drew up an agreement to that effect. This, as far as I know, is the first pair of foxes to be sold publicly.

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### OBLIGED TO SET A HIGHER STANDARD

The day for catching the three pairs of foxes came, and I went into the ranch and placed them in the pens that had been prepared for them. Then we went to the little house close by, and he wrote me a check for \$10,000.00—all the money I ever expected to have in my life. But I had no intention of retiring. Far from it; I had hardly begun.

When this man went away I went down to my ranch and looked over my foxes, and as I looked among these black and silver beauties skipping and playing with each other I could not notice the number any fewer since I had removed the three pairs. Well, I thought, what have I here anyway? I have all the money I ever expected to have in my life, but I have only begun. I was obliged to set a higher standard as I considered the possibilities of the fox business. This was the first deal of any importance I had ever made, and it went thru smoothly and without any difficulty. The \$10,000.00 did not look nearly so large to me now as I had anticipated it would, and this transaction served but to stimulate me to greater achievements in my undertakings.

The combine having been broken, now the other ranchers opened their doors to the public and sales were made for almost any price that might be asked, as there was no competition among the present ranches because there were not nearly enough foxes to supply the immediate local demand. Speculation ran riot. Foxes sold for as high as \$20,000.00 per pair and probably higher.

Now fox-farming is based primarily on pelt values, and such prices as above mentioned are very much in excess of what the best skins will bring in normal times and absolutely unreasonable. Young foxes that had not yet been born were contracted for at fabulous prices. There is no knowing what heights prices would have reached, or how long these abnormal conditions would have lasted, but a sudden lull was brought about by the outbreak of the war. As I have said before, silver fox farming is based primarily on fur values, and previous to this date the great fur markets of the world were in London. It was the nobility of France and England that wore our costly products and the Americans had hardly heard of them. At this particular time the Europeans had more to think about than the height of fashion in furs. Consequently, silver fox, in common with other products in its class, became neglected. Prices declined, and during the years of the war, as with all other such enterprises, business was rather dull and ranchers were forced to take what consolation they might out of returns from sales of pelts in the United States. Now we find a change. People got out of the way of sending furs to London, and now New York, St. Louis and Montreal are the popular sales, especially for silver fox. With the return to peace, furs became again in demand, and prices increased, together with the prices of breeders.

\*"Thus it was that the war years proved, in this particular case, to be a period of reconstruction." Today the fox business is run on its true pelt value which assures present permanent prices. "Foxes under intelligent handling will more than double their numbers annually. This business, therefore, unlike merchandizing or manufacturing, contains the power of meeting the situation created by decreased value without sustaining loss of capital. Therein lies its

strength." "The Silver Fox Breeders Association was then incorporated. This organization was formed with the general object of conserving the industry by advancing the interest of the breeders and protecting the purchaser against fraud and misrepresentation."

*\*The Fox Breeding Industry.—F. L. Rogers.*

## INSTRUMENTAL IN MAKING MICHIGAN THE CENTER OF THE FOX INDUSTRY OF THE UNITED STATES

In January, 1915, I took my family to Florida to spend the winter, and while there met a man from the state of Michigan. In the course of our conversation I made it known to him that I was an



extensive breeder of silver foxes. He being a sharp business man, immediately wanted to know more about the industry. The outcome of our chance acquaintance was that in the following summer I brought to the state of Michigan ten pairs of silver foxes. These, I believe, were the first ones to produce young and raise them successfully in the state. There may have been a few small ranches of inferior stock in different parts previously, but they had accomplished little or nothing.

Michigan has now about \$2,000,000.00 worth of foxes, largely due to the small beginning I made here in 1915, and is the recognized center of the fox industry in the United States.

Today I have a large interest, almost sole owner, in a chain of ranches extending from P. E. I., Canada, thru Alpine, Lakewood, and Traverse City, Michigan, to Houghton in the far off copper country on the shores of Lake Superior. Each year finds my ranches depleted of all foxes that I can spare to sell for breeding purposes, and each year I increase the size of my ranches to try and meet the demands for stock.

Last winter, 1921, while in Florida, I placed several pairs of silver foxes together with a large number of beautiful pelts on exhibition in Jacksonville. The latter were handled by thousands of tourists from every state in the union, which did them no good to say the least, saying nothing about the intense heat and other climatic conditions to which they were subjected. From there I sent four of them, three blacks and a silver, to Alfred Fraser, fur buyer, in New York, and have just received word from him to the effect that he sold one black for \$500.00 and another for \$400.00. The black pelts are the kind that it is claimed are not as much in demand as silvers. However, I shall be pleased to hear that the silver has brought as large a price. These pelts were taken from our foxes born and raised in Michigan, and were of only average quality, as they were some left over after mating. My experience has been that it is quality that counts, whether black or silver. I noticed while showing my pelts in the south that in almost every case the lady's choice was the black. I am only stating conditions as I found them regardless of what others think or say.

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## SKINS

The person who raises silver foxes for their pelts has a great advantage over the man who must trap his fox for the skin. The latter is glad to get a silver at any time within the winter months, and almost anyone knows that a pelt will not be prime if killed out of season. Many trophies have thus been caught when not at their best, and as a result only a part of the true value is received. On the other hand, breeders mate their foxes to give best quality fur; they keep them in large pens where they cannot chafe or rub themselves, and feed them on all the oily food they will eat, until they become very fat. Thus they are kept until prime and then killed. The skins are dried and placed on the market. The fur is then very long and silky, and the skin quite thick and firm.

Now it may not be generally known that what is known locally as the black fox is more properly known as silver fox, and from this some people erroneously suppose that the color is almost white or a silver grey. This is not so, for the name silver is given to it on account of the presence of silver hairs among the black, most commonly on the hips, back and face. This which is known as a



silver hair is not white but black, with a band of silver about half an inch wide placed about one-third of the way from the outer point of the hair. The pure black fox in the outside world is very rare, the tendency there being to run very silvery. Two well bred silver foxes may produce some blacks in their litters, while a pair of black ones may produce silvers among their offspring. However, litters of all silver or black may be produced by mating two light silvers or two pure blacks, but black and silver foxes are one and the same thing and belong to the same family. The skins of these valuable animals are always listed on the great fur markets as silver and sold as such, whether black or silver in color. As foxes grow older they grow more silvery, that is, more silver hairs appear. As to which is the more valuable, that rests entirely with fashion, which is continually changing, sometimes calling for one and sometimes the other. The prudent fox breeder will keep both kinds in stock in order to supply the demands of the market as they are created.

Skins are sold at auction to the highest bidder. The house that sells them receives five or six per cent commission and the balance is forwarded, together with the account of the sales, to the farmer.

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### **RANCH BRED FOXES SUPERIOR TO THOSE TAKEN FROM WILDS**

It is quite reasonable to suppose that fur grown on foxes bred for fur quality, by selective mating and proper care, should surpass that

taken from a fox in the wild which is very probably the progeny of red parents.

Statistics give the following figures which prove this not a mere supposition, but an established fact.

The Hudson Bay Company received an average price per skin of about \$150.00 for pelts taken from the wilds for sixty years beginning about 1850. But all furs were much lower in price than today. Records show that silver fox increased 150 per cent or more in value during the last twenty-five years. This will have to be taken into consideration in order to get a true comparison.

The highest priced silver fox skin taken from the wilds, that we know of, sold for \$1,400.00 in 1914.

About the year 1900, ranch bred silver fox skins began to appear on the markets, which realized higher prices than was ever heard of before. From 1900-1911 the average prices paid to ranchers for their products were approximately four times as great as prices paid for skins taken from the wilds during the same period.

Dalton received the following prices for skins taken from his ranch: In 1907, \$2,141.32; in 1910, \$2,627.96, and in 1912, for a pelt taken from a fox that died in October, \$1,995.30.

He also received an average price of \$1,385.98 for 25 skins in 1910.

In 1910, James Gordon received \$2,450.00 for a single pelt, and in 1914, an average of about \$1,000.00 each for 3 pelts taken from foxes that were not in first class condition.

The Gordons mentioned above are natives of P. E. I., and James Gordon is one of the men in the partnership from whom I purchased my first pair of foxes.

Now we believe our ranch bred fox is growing better every year. But many beginners think of starting the business by mating the common red and a silver fox together, in the hope that they may get something good in this way. But as the pure-bred animal and the high priced skin is the one in which no vestige of red appears, the reader can surely see the folly of allowing the red to destroy the only black he may have.

The originators began this industry by mating what silvers they could get with something of a lesser value. A few reds appeared at first, but as time went on they were gradually weeded out and the best retained, so that after many years of study and labor we have what we call today a family of Royal Silvers second to none in the world. For a man to start this all over again, to my mind, is absurd, seeing that we are still improving our standard strains, and that time is so valuable in this year of Our Lord one thousand nine hundred and twenty one.



## THE KIND OF STOCK WE CARRY

Altho The Silver Fox Breeders' Association has been incorporated to protect the purchaser of breeders against fraud and misrepresentation by the registration of the best strains of foxes, yet the buyer is not wholly protected, for there is a great deal of difference between foxes of registered stock under the present system. Now, I am a firm believer in the registration of foxes but not as done today. I have seen foxes that were eligible for registration because their parents were in the registered class, which should have been excluded as unfit because they lacked either size or good guard hair, or perhaps both. This is very probably caused by inbreeding and is the fault of the rancher and not the foxes. I have also seen pelts taken from the registered animals that have brought a pretty low figure, and, as a general rule, foxes with poor guard hair transmit the defect to their offspring.

Foxes, I believe, should be registered according to a certain standard, based on the conditions that exist under the present system, and in addition be required to score a good number of points, first, for fur, and secondly, for size. This system is known as Advanced Registration.

The argument against the method suggested, is that a fox may pass the tests for registration one year, and fail the next, whether from improper care, or other reasons. But I think this less likely to happen, than, with a careless keeper in charge, foxes running down from first class stock to poor quality in three or four generations. In either case, however, the fox should not be eligible for registration, and no Association should be in favor of placing such a product before the public, represented for something that it is not.

If we are to build up a high class, standard animal, we must do it in the way above mentioned, and the foxes that cannot stand the tests must be discarded and put in a poorer class. Thus the public will be safeguarded because the article is represented for what it really is.

Good fur is the basis of fox-farming, and if fox men are so short-sighted as to place registration papers before individual merit, it will soon show in the race of foxes produced, and a great many men who expect to get good foxes by relying on the strength of the recommendation will be greatly disappointed.

The ancestors of the first foxes I purchased were bought from Charles Dalton, but in comparing the prices I received from the fur markets with those that Dalton received in 1910, I concluded that his prices were a little higher than mine. He had brought in some new blood from outside and this had made the difference. When I saw Dalton's returns I immediately asked him if he would sell me a few pairs of his best foxes and at what price. He asked me what price per pair I was selling my foxes for, and I told him \$4,000.00,

"Well," he said, "my foxes bring higher prices than yours. I'll charge you \$6,000.00 and pick you good foxes." I said, "How much will you ask me and let me pick my own foxes, as I am a fox man and know something about foxes, too?" He considered a short time and said: "You can have the pick of the best foxes in my ranch for \$6,500.00 per pair." I took several pairs at this price. When I had taken what foxes I wanted from the pens that had made record prices on the market the previous year, and had them in the boxes outside, he said to me: "Mr. Tuplin, you have done something no man has ever done before and I will never allow to do again—select his own foxes from my ranch."

The prices that induced me to take these foxes at such a high figure were as follows:

The average of 25 skins sold April, 1910, was \$1,385.98.

One skin sold for \$1,995.30, another for \$2,141.32, and another for \$2,627.96. The latter is the highest price ever paid for a single skin.

I bought a single male fox sometime later for \$10,500.00. The blood of this sire runs thru our foxes today.

Always after the best, I purchased two pairs of Alaska foxes in 1919 from the party who received the highest prices for skins placed on the market that year.

The prices that this man received in 1919 for pelts were as follows:

2 of his pelts sold for \$2,500.00.

1 of his pelts sold for \$1,125.00.

1 of his pelts sold for \$1,100.00.

1 of his pelts sold for \$1,090.00.

2 of his pelts sold for \$1000.00.

Last year (1920) this man exhibited his stock at the Fox Shows at Montreal, Boston and Muskegon, and at each place received first prizes. Quite recently I received the following letter from him with regard to the foxes purchased:

(Copy)

Northam, P. E. Island, Canada.

May 9, 1921.

Mr. Frank Tuplin,

Summerside, P. E. I.

Dear Mr. Tuplin:

We are enclosing pictures of some of our "Prize Winning Foxes and Pelts," also an enlargement of our "Four Champions." We thought you might like these, and to know something of the breeding of your foxes in relation to our prize winners.

"Sandy," the year-old male, which you purchased from us, is a

full brother to "Lady Rose." She was the "Grand Champion Female Pup of the Montreal Show," and was first prize winner at Boston and Muskegon. The Black Male Pup is bred along the same lines as "Alaska Queen" and "Alaska Beauty," both "Grand Champion Females," he has at least 50% of this blood. The large Light Silver Female is a full sister to "Silver King," first prize winner at Muskegon and second at Boston, her father, "Yukon" was third prize winner at Montreal, scoring  $1 \frac{2}{3}$  points below first, and was second prize winner at Boston, scoring  $93 \frac{1}{8}$  points. Your dark Silver Female is a full sister to "Kluane," second prize winner at Montreal, and scoring only  $\frac{1}{4}$  of a point below first, she was third at Boston and was beaten at Muskegon by our own Fox. Your foxes are bred in the blue, and we do not doubt the statement you made in reference to having the finest silver female in North America. . . .

Very truly yours,

MILLIGAN & MORRISON.

(Signed) Geo. L. Morrison.

I then mated the Standard and Alaska and produced what we call the Improved Silver Fox. We call him improved because we have seen him improved by the added new blood.

Alaska foxes are large, their silver clear, and their black is perfect. I am breeding Alaska foxes in their pure state and have several large puppies this season.

A party purchased a Peace River female some time ago, which produced some of the finest foxes ever raised on P. E. I. I immediately purchased two of these pups for breeding purposes.

It can be easily seen that I have kept my stock to the highest point of perfection.



The fox we are breeding today will be a better one ten years hence than he is now, and the man who has the foresight to keep improving his stock, will be selling choice breeders in the years to come, while his tardy competitors will be pulling off pelts.

The farmer who is careful with his grain crop, hand picking his seed, cleaning it thoroughly, and producing that which gives the greatest yield, will sell his grain for seed purposes and at a high price, while the dilatory farmer who goes on in the same old way will have to be satisfied with the same old price.

No man will sell foxes for less than their pelt values, so that when any fox man gives you a low price on pups, you can be sure that they are not worth much, and poor silver foxes are a poor buy. If you get good stock anywhere in the animal kingdom you must expect to pay a reasonable price for it.

Many men are ignorant of the quality of silver foxes. They think them all alike, as long as they are black and silver, but this is a very wrong idea. There is a brown black and a muddy silver, the pelts of which sell low on the market. The best black is the one in which no vestige of brown appears. It must be a blue black and a clear silver. This kind will not fade when worn, but will hold its color until worn out.

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### THE PEERLESS BLACK FOX SKIN

“Did you ever see such a skin?” quoth he;  
there’s naught in the world so fine—  
“Such fullness of fur as black as the night,  
such lustre, such size, such shine;”

\* \* \*

“For look ye, the skin—it’s as smooth as sin  
and black as the core of the pit.”

\* \* \*

And a prize, likewise, in a woman’s eyes  
is a peerless black fox skin.

—Robert W. Service.

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### WHERE FOXES CAN BE RAISED

Foxes can be raised successfully in almost any of the provinces of Canada, or the northern part of the United States. Ranches exist today in most of the Canadian Provinces and in Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Wisconsin, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Oregon, Washington and Alaska. I feel certain, however, that they may be raised in any country where wild foxes exist, but of course, the fur will not be worth as much where the climate is warm as where the winters are long and severe.

## LOCATION FOR A RANCH

In choosing a location for a ranch, several things must be borne in mind in order that the site may be a satisfactory one. The lay of the land must be looked into, as rising ground is required. Never build on low land, because this would not insure good drainage, and water might lie there in spring and be a serious handicap when the little foxes come out. The soil should be porous. A good growth of almost any kind of trees will do that will give the required covering from the sun, as the closer the foliage and more shaded the place, the richer and darker the fur will be, and consequently more valuable on the fur market. It also hides the foxes from view, and they require seclusion. A growth of deciduous trees is best, as this allows the sun to penetrate into the pens in spring and dry up the



ground, while the leaves will exclude the rays of the sun in summer. The ranch should not be situated near a town or village, for there is always a tendency for strangers to come around. This keeps the foxes disturbed and lessens their chances both of having young and raising them.

## CONSTRUCTION OF RANCH

The pens are made all sizes by fox men, some going as far as to allow them space one hundred feet square. But I believe this is a waste both of wire and land. I have tried all sizes and have found by experience that a pen 25 by 35 feet is fully as good as larger.

In Canada a trench is dug in the ground eighteen inches wide, in which the posts are placed which support the walls of the pens, and also the bottom of the wall. This part that extends into the ground is made of  $1\frac{1}{2}$  inch mesh No. 15 gauge wire, and runs about three feet deep. This same wire extends about three feet above ground so that the little pups cannot go thru it when very young, as they would 2 inch mesh. I have lost several pups earlier in the business by using wire of too large mesh close to the ground.

The rest of the walls are built of 2 inch mesh No. 16 wire and are about nine feet high. At the top there is an overhang inward of 18 inches, which prevents the fox from climbing out as they can climb the walls like cats. A partition is run across this pen about five feet from the end; this small pen is for the male when the foxes are separated, leaving a pen about 25 by 30 feet in size for the female and her puppies. A short chute thru the partition connects the two pens and it is closed with the male in his own pen at the time of the year that the female is expected to have her young. All the partitions between pens are double, made of  $1\frac{1}{2}$  inch mesh wire up three feet and one foot apart; the other six feet is made same as other walls. This keeps the foxes from fighting and injuring each other thru the wire as they would do otherwise. The partitions should not be boarded up, but left so the foxes may see each other, as thus they are more contented.

When I came to the United States a few years ago I built my pens in the way mentioned above, but I found, owing to the difference in the soil—the ground here is very soft and sandy—that although I had the walls running down four feet the foxes would dig still deeper. I also had young foxes die because the sand caved in on them. Then I tried another plan. I laid a wire mat all over the surface of each pen and covered it with about one foot of sand and dirt. And this is the plan that is adopted today, and is far superior to digging trenches.

Our houses are placed both on the surface and underground. Personally I like the underground house best; a fox's natural home is in the ground, and in building a ranch everything must be made as nearly natural as possible. Where there is heavy soil, however, the house on the surface is more suitable. This latter house is made about three feet square and has a single slanting roof on hinges so that it may be opened. A nest box 21 inches long, 14 inches wide, and 14 inches high is placed in one corner away from the chute, so the draft will not be too great for the little foxes when born. This box is also made so that it may be opened on the side, in case need should arise to handle the foxes. The chute is made of  $1\frac{1}{4}$  inch boards three feet long, nailed together to form a rectangular hole 7 by 8 inches. It is placed in one corner of the house in such a position from the nest box that when the female goes in the house she has to turn at right angles to go into the nest. The underground

house is built similar to the other but with an additional compartment two feet higher than the house proper. This compartment has a roof on hinges and serves as a manhole. This allows the attendant free access at all times. When the house is underground two feet of this manhole is all that is visible. When the attendant wishes to see how things are in the house, he lifts the roof of the manhole and steps down a short ladder nailed to the wall. He then opens a door about 18 inches wide and three feet long and has easy access to the interior of the house. A chute about ten feet long leads from the house to the surface of the pen. In order to make catching easier the top of that part of the chute that is above the ground is made on hinges so that it may be opened. Each house is also equipped with a ventilator.

All the trees in the pens should be trimmed as high as a man can reach standing on the ground. No knots should project and if the bark is very rough, as in the case of the Michigan Oak, a piece of sheet iron about two feet wide should be nailed around the tree five feet from the ground to prevent climbing.

An outside or guard fence should be built sufficiently large so that it will surround all the pens that are likely to be needed. This is made of the same kind of wire that is used in building the pens and must be foxproof in case Reynard may chance to escape from his enclosure at any time. To make it so, the wall is built nine feet high with an overhang on the inside about two feet wide like the pens.

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## CARE AND FEEDING

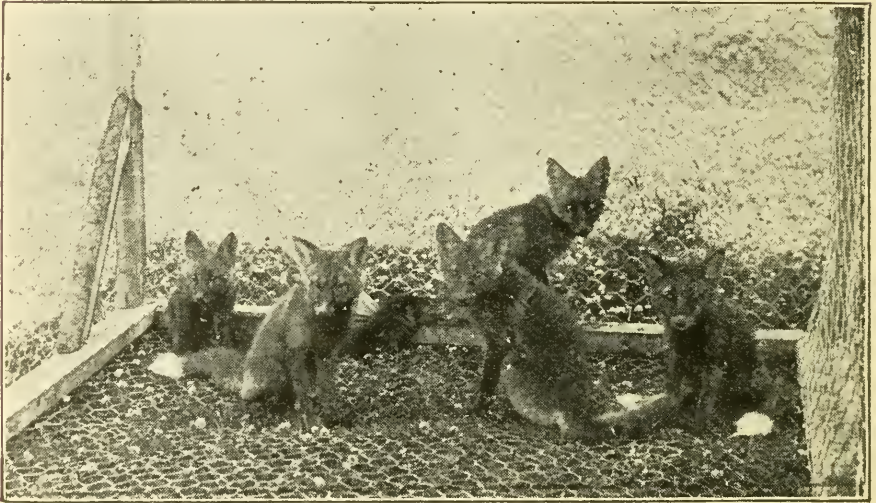
I will now proceed to show how foxes should be fed and cared for beginning October 1st, as that is the date on which foxes are either mated for breeding purposes or are placed in pens to prepare them for killing. The male and female are put together this early so that they may become acquainted, as it usually takes weeks of mating before two strange foxes will breed.

I will assume that the ranch has been completed and everything is in readiness, because when the foxes are placed in a strange pen they have enough to worry them without the attendant making any undue noise. Bid your hammer and saw farewell, lay them away, and leave them there unless some emergency should arise.

On placing the foxes in their new pen do not open the box and let them run out in the open, because they are likely to be frightened, both of the new attendant and the strange surroundings, and may climb the walls in an effort to escape. In coming down or in case of a fall, they are very liable to break a limb. A better way is to place the opening of the box, in which the foxes are, close to the mouth of the chute that runs into the ground, and, gently raising

the slide from the hole in the box, allow the foxes to run down into the house. Now you should leave the pen at once and not stay around and bother them. The foxes by running into the chute will quickly find a way of escape and a hiding place in case of apparent danger to them.

Now give two or three pieces of meat about the size of a hen's egg for each fox at each meal, morning and evening. Feed all the nice meat, either horseflesh or offal, that they will eat up clean. If small fresh fish without sharp bones can be procured, this may be fed twice a week, but omit all meat at fish meal. They should have all the clean, fresh water they can drink until the snow falls. There is no need of watering in the winter months except when ground becomes bare. If the foxes have been accustomed to a milk diet,



they should be weaned gradually by giving cracker and milk about twice a week, in place of meat or fish.

No hard and fast rule can be set down in feeding foxes. I have been asked how many pounds of meat should be fed daily, but I cannot answer the question in that way. Appetites vary among foxes just the same as among other animals. The foxes must be fed according to their demands for food, and no two pairs can be fed alike, as one will require more than the other. So the attendant is to be the judge. They must not be allowed to bury food for then they are getting too much. On the other hand, do not be satisfied in finding the dishes cleaned out every time they are fed. It is difficult to tell then, whether they are getting all they require or not. Stick them once in a while until there is some left, then you can tell



pretty well about what they need, and so on. By feeding this way they soon become accustomed to one keeper, and if they are not of too shy a nature, will welcome him at mealtime.

Foxes usually breed between January 15th and March 15th, so that when the former date comes around, watch carefully. There is not much fear but that the female will be noticed when she is in heat, and the male is particularly active at this time. If the exact date of breeding can be obtained, so much the better, because the date almost to a day can be figured out when the female will give birth, as she carries her young about 52 days.

Two weeks after the female has bred, begin to change a little from solid to softer food. Now remove the male, this should be done as quietly as possible. If I cannot tell when the female breeds, both foxes are turned out occasionally and the male is not taken away until the female shows signs of growing heavy. I want to state right here that the attendant must be very careful at this time of the season, as the period of gestation with the female is half gone and she must not be excited or aroused. Many a young female has aborted at this time owing to the carelessness or ignorance of the attendant.

The female should then get fox biscuit and milk, and a little raw meat in it, all fed warm, in the morning; in the evening a little cooked meat in a little of the water in which it was boiled. In this way the female is being prepared to have plenty of milk with which to feed her little pups when they arrive.

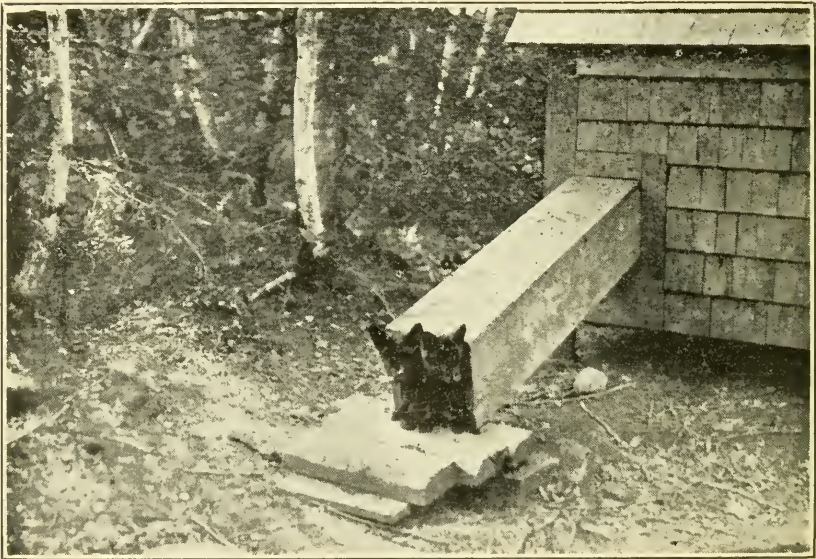
Many a fox has lost her litter because she failed to have sufficient milk to nourish them. Few fox men think of this, but continue to feed in the usual way. Many a female fox has also lost her young through excitement, and her owner knows nothing about it until he finds in the spring that she has not produced a litter. Then he blames the fox business when in a great many cases the trouble is with the management and not with the foxes. They will do their part if only he will do his. But supposing he has had no misfortunes in separating male and female, and that he has fed properly for milk, there is a great deal yet to be learned. The attendant must establish between himself and the pregnant female a confidence that must not be broken. When the female finds that she is going to have young she begins to regard her attendant with suspicion. Her foxy instinct tells her that he may take away her young as he did her mate, and as the time draws nearer for her to give birth, she watches him closer and closer. She observes every movement that is made out of the ordinary and he must assume a careless attitude as though he does not notice her.

All foods should be warmed from early fall, and especially at this time. I put the milk on the stove and make it so that I can just keep my hand in it nicely. Then the fox biscuit which has previously been broken up and soaked in as much water as it will absorb,

is put in. Do not put too much biscuit in the milk; make it about the same consistency as vegetable soup. Place little enough meat in the dishes at each feeding so that the foxes will eat the biscuit and milk. Do not expect too much of them at first; remember that after a long winter on raw food that it is hard to get them to change. Beat up an egg and stir it in the milk while on the stove; it makes good rich food. We feed half whole milk and half skimmed milk, and think it better than all whole milk, because some cows give such rich milk that it is strong for the little puppies.

As the female grows heavier, give her all the sloppy food that she will eat once a day; twice might physic her and cause her to abort.

When the female goes in to have her young she usually misses a



meal. In that case it is not necessary to feed her heavy, as she does not need any food for twenty-four hours. Still, I usually place a small piece of warm meat about the size of a thimble in her dish as a tester. If it is gone at the next mealtime the chances are that she has got thru her trying ordeal all right, and is now coming out for food. Feed her lightly, and bring her back to her usual feed by increasing the amount a little each time. Do not allow her to bury any meat in the cold ground as she may dig it up at some future time and eat it chilled or frozen.

Remember that she is wild and not a domestic animal, and if she is a valuable one no man that is not thoroughly conversant with

fox raising has any business around at this time. However, the attendant must come daily and do his best as she must be fed, and if he will do his part properly she will reward him by bringing her litter out at the appointed time. Otherwise she may take offense and carry them out—her constant fear being that this man will take them away from her—and they will probably die from exposure. Perhaps she may hide them in the snow to save them, and many foxes are lost this way. This is not parent-slaughter. People who think they know, talk a lot about parent-slaughter, but no animal is kinder to her young and there is no better mother than the female fox. In nine cases out of ten all losses are a direct consequence of mismanagement.

I have heard it said by breeders that know very little, that there is nothing to be learned—"no great art"—just feed well and let nature take its course. But I want to tell those self-styled adepts if I ever meet them, that we are not raising foxes naturally, and must make due allowances. To begin with we build them a small enclosure and deprive them of their natural exercise. We also feed them strange food which they must eat whether they like it or not. We build the female fox an unnatural home to have her young in. She is fed from an unnatural source and her success depends entirely upon the judgment and knowledge of the hand that does the feeding. We who had to learn the business without any teaching found it hard, while those who have the benefit of our experiences may find it easy enough.

Now let me show you, by way of illustration, just what happened all because of a man's ignorance. A man bought a pair of foxes but was told very little about the business. He knew enough, however, to remove the male, and after doing so continued to feed the female daily. He went to the ranch one morning and she did not come out as usual; he had not been told to expect this, and thought she might have escaped, so he began to look around to see if this was the case. Finding no holes in the enclosure he decided to look in her house to see if she was there. He lifted the roof and there she was with her four little puppies nestled close to her bosom, and her big tail outside of them to keep them nice and warm. He imagined, of course, that he had done wrong and carefully closing the door of her house, stalked away and ran home as fast as he could, saying at every step, "No more poor days for me; my fortune is made." But listen! He never saw the little foxes again. Before he returned she surely carried them all out and buried them.

What would a bird do if you put your hand in her nest? Leave it, of course, and let me tell you that a fox is much more sensitive than a bird. When this man disturbed his fox she thought: "Oh, you brute, you have discovered my little ones and now you mean to take them." And lest on his return he should carry them away, she removed them one by one and hid them in the cold ground or snow.

Any place was better than the one discovered. And so they died and the man got the knowledge that he should have paid a few extra dollars for when he bought his foxes. Thus he lost many thousands—but such is life.

Every man who invests his money in foxes should get with them the knowledge, experience and education of a successful breeder, and the man who sets down a pair of foxes and expects to make a fortune without this is very foolish indeed and will likely lose money.

Fox farming is no get-rich-quick scheme that a man can drop a few thousand dollars into and reap large profits. It is the man who pays attention to his business and puts a lot of work into it who gets the most out.

After she has had her pups the female may be fed biscuit and milk twice a day, with just the right amount of meat so that she will eat the mush up clean. Be sure, however, that she is getting enough as you do not know how many pups she is feeding. She may have seven and receive little enough to sustain three.

At three weeks old the pups require something more than the female can give them, so she carries in some of the food and little by little they learn to eat.

Now carefully open up the den and give each little pup a worm tablet. Instructions for this will be found under the heading Diseases.

In about thirty days the pups will come out of their own accord. Now a small dish must be provided for each, and one for the mother; otherwise the little fellows will fight and probably hurt each other. At first give mostly milk and biscuit—just a little, remember, as the mother is feeding them with her own milk as well as you, and they do not require much. As they grow older and need more, increase accordingly. Put a little cooked meat and a beaten egg in the milk, just the same as previously given to the mother.

The old fox usually eats after the puppies are done and one wonders what she lives on. She soon shows the effects of the drain made upon her, however. About this time she sheds her coat and being faded and shaggy looks like two cents, but never mind, she will come back. Take her puppies away, or her from them, when they are weaned, which is about two and one half months after birth. Now, if properly cared for, she should duplicate her last litter or perhaps better it the next season.

After October 1st the young foxes are fed on meat and fish, which gradually replaces the biscuit, eggs, and milk, for they are placed on solid food for the cold winter weather.

Great care must be exercised in handling foxes at all times, because their teeth are very sharp, and when they bite it is done

with all their might. Still I catch and handle foxes as often as required and have no trouble. Catching boxes are used for this purpose, and iron tongs which slip around their necks. These can be bought for a small sum and are very useful.

I do not recommend doubling up, that is, placing one male with two or more females. It requires experience and skill. The first year I ever tried this way of mating was in 1908. It had never been done before, as far as I can find out, but I was successful in my attempt as I raised ten pups from the two females. The only safe way this scheme can be followed is to place each female in a separate pen, and have a chute thru the partition joining the two pens. Then allow the male to go back and forth, first with one and then the other, every other day all winter, until the breeding season is over. Never allow the two females together; sometimes they will agree, but they might not, and fight thru jealousy in the mating period and one kill the other.

Double mating can be fairly well managed with a quiet male of good disposition, which can be easily driven back and forth daily, but taking everything into consideration I prefer a male for each female.

Earlier in the business I have had double mating do well one year, while the next, in some cases, the male would refuse to mate with both females and one would be left a blank. Besides, if the male should be young and not well enough developed, it means that the use of two females is lost.

With our present scientific manner of feeding almost all young foxes breed in captivity the first year. It was not always so, for in 1905, when I bought my first pair of foxes, the parties from whom I purchased rarely ever had a female breed the first year.

I am having great success in raising foxes in the state of Michigan. Almost all my females breed and raise their puppies and it is a fact that the pups are much larger than those from the same stock in Canada. The ground is dry in spring when the little pups first come out, thus affording them a surety of life which they do not have in my ranch in Canada. In the latter place the weather is cold and damp, with much snow and ice at this critical time, and many young foxes are lost at three or four weeks old, when they first come out.

The fur, I believe, will also equal that raised in Canada. I have hardly had a chance to test this as much as I would like, but last winter, 1921, I sent four pelts to Alfred Fraser taken from my farm at Alpine. These were of average quality, some that were left over after mating, and I received for two of them \$900.00. The others I have not heard from yet. This is only a fair price but goes to show that as high quality fur can be produced here as anywhere.

## SELECTION OF FOXES FOR BREEDERS

The selection of foxes for breeding purposes, performed so as to produce the best results, requires a great deal of care, study and experience. I believe that there are many poor, short haired, small and undesirable silver foxes existing, chiefly because of the lack of judgment on the part of the man who has affairs under his control at the ranch. There are many fox men claiming to be successful breeders who lack the knowledge necessary to produce the highest type of fox from the stock on hand.

Fox men are inclined to be know-it-alls. A new man, as a rule, will follow instructions as to feeding, breeding and general management. But I have noticed that in nearly every case, after the first year, they begin experimenting more or less, and following theories of their own which is often detrimental to the foxes. They do not take into consideration the fact that they are inexperienced in the business; that they are now going over the same road which has been well traveled by men who had their ups and downs years ago, and have finally reached success through untiring and endless efforts. The only safe rule in any business for the novice, is to follow in the footsteps of the successful man; to study and adopt his methods until some practical experience and a working knowledge of the business has been gained.

Too often the man who sells foxes is blamed for the poor foxes of the third or fourth year rancher, to whom he may have sold the first breeders, while in reality the attendant is at fault.

The experienced man selects his foxes, studying their relation to each other and what will produce the best size and color. Disposition is also taken into consideration, the ultimate aim being to produce a type, the finished pelt of which when placed on the market, will command the highest figure. This can only be done by first, finding out what type it is that produces this price, and secondly, by selecting the best each year from the most prolific strains that have given the highest pelt values in the past years.

Experience is required, and no beginner can be expected to do as well unaided as the man who has spent years in the business. So the only thing to do is to co-operate with some man whose judgment can be relied upon, until sufficient knowledge has been acquired to assure the best results.

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## DISEASES

If foxes are fed and managed properly they are not subject to disease. Young foxes, however, should be treated for worms at about three weeks old. I give one of Burroughs and Welcome's worm tablets to each pup at that age. The tablet is thrown well back in the throat, then followed with the blunt end of a lead pencil

until it is pushed past the swallow. In about a week repeat the dose. In this way we rarely ever lose any little ones.

In June or July the pups are caught and examined for fleas; if there are any, I dust Keating's Flea powder over them, rubbing it well into the hair. This is usually all that is required, but can be repeated if necessary.

We have heard of foxes having distemper. This is probably caused by improper feeding, or due to a very sudden change from a hot to a cold climate. Having never had a case of it in my ranch nor ever having come in contact with it, I cannot give a cure.

Sore eyes sometimes appear in summer, which, I believe, is caused chiefly by feeding fish. A light wash, Creolin diluted with water, will suffice to bring about a cure.

For canker in the ear, try a squirt of automobile oil, and after five days repeat. Give a dose of Castor Oil, and fox should show some sign of improvement.

If pups are overfed when young, it may produce scouring; this is caused by indigestion, which in turn will cause the young foxes to become weak in the legs. This is known as Rickets, and rarely occurs while experienced men are feeding.

Bad feeding is the cause of nearly all fox troubles. It will keep the foxes from breeding, cause the female to abort, kill the young, and sometimes the old foxes. In short, I believe that ninety-five per cent of diseases among foxes is caused by mismanagement; the other five per cent we may attribute to causes over which we have no control. This being the case, the reader can readily see how much depends upon the knowledge and judgment of the caretaker.

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## FURRING

After the pups have all been selected and mated for breeders and the old foxes placed in their respective pens, those that are to be killed are put in large enclosures, sometimes as many as six together. Young foxes will seldom fight, but do not forget that the old breeding males cannot be placed together as they will fight to the death. These foxes are then fed all the oily foods they will eat, and made very fat. They are not allowed any shelter except in the case of very stormy weather, and immediately this is over they are turned out again and kept in the open.

In Canada foxes are prime much earlier than in Michigan. In the former place we kill about the first of December, in Alpine and Lakewood about the middle of February, and in Houghton the first of the new year.

## SKINNING

The fox having been killed he is now hung up by the hind legs, the skin started around the hind and fore feet, and pulled off over the head without ripping it up the belly. The tail is split to the end and the bone removed. The skin then, fur side in, is pulled well down on a nicely shaped board, made especially for the purpose, and tacked there. A wedge is run up thru the middle of the board to give the skin the required width. The fat is scraped off and in three days the skin is ready to turn. After about a week, having been combed and brushed to make it look as well as possible, this skin can be placed on the market ready for sale. All this is very easily done and is only a part of the caretaker's work, requiring no extraordinary skill.

If the skin is to be dressed, it is sent to one of the fur dressing houses, of which there are many, and made into a neckpiece, for about \$28 or \$30.

Now the man who raised the fox and had the skin dressed for the few dollars mentioned above, can afford to sell it much cheaper than the man who retails it in some large city after it has passed thru three or four hands. Besides this, the wearer knows the fur is genuine and not dyed when purchased direct from the farmer.

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## FOX FARMING AS A BUSINESS

To the business man or office employee, tired of inside work or whose health demands that he get "back to the land," fox farming offers a pleasant prospect and a profitable occupation, at which he has every chance of success if he gives his attention to the work at hand. There is nothing that the average person cannot grasp under a competent instructor, and a year of study will fit a person for work for himself. Here as elsewhere, careful previous study, patience, good judgment and other principles which are employed for success in other enterprises, are needed.

Now we are all after the almighty dollar and there is no person who wants to toil from morning to night for a laborer's wage when he can make a moderate investment, spend a few hours a day in attending to his business, and reap from twenty-five to a hundred per cent profit and probably more.

Of all the other live stock industries of the world, silver fox farming surpasses the best. There is no heavy work or long hours and the rancher becomes "a student of the science of breeding—a most fascinating study."

The cost of keeping a pair of foxes for one year amounts to about Fifty Dollars. Foxes give birth to as many as nine puppies at a litter and have young once a year.



To the man who wishes to make an investment only, and not become a rancher, the prospects are as good. He may buy his foxes and leave them in the ranch where they were purchased, to be fed and cared for the same as the other foxes, for a reasonable charge per year.

Now let us see for a moment what a pair of foxes is capable of producing. I have a female which gave me twenty-four puppies in the last four years. Twenty-four foxes is twelve pairs. Twelve pairs if sold for breeding purposes at the modest price of \$1,500.00 per pair, would yield \$18,000.00. This female will breed, barring accidents, for six years more, and should produce, despite her growing age, as many more foxes and as much more money. She and her mate must then lay down their lives and give up their glossy pelts to be worn by some New York lady who must pay in the vicinity of \$3,000.00 for them when made up. Thus it can be easily seen what the value of a breeding pair of foxes really is.

Fox farming today is no get-rich-quick speculation, however, that a man can drop a few thousands of dollars into and become rich over night, but a sound investment, a profitable industry, and a business in which any one may become engaged.

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## FUTURE OF THE SILVER FOX INDUSTRY

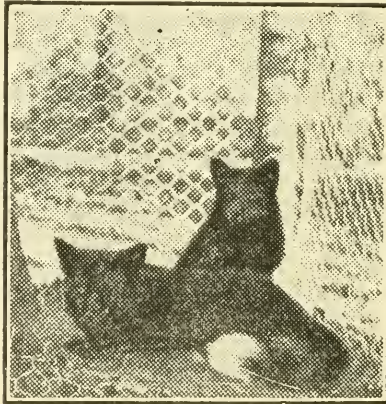
I have great faith in the future of the Silver Fox Industry, and in fact, it has always looked good to me.

When I was only five years in the business I had people ask me how long I thought it would last. The same question is being asked me very often today. My answer to these questions is that every year I have disposed of the entire supply of puppies I have had for sale. I find that each year others are learning about this most attractive business, and desirous of getting into it. Michigan is a large state, but I am selling foxes in many other states, east, south and west. The country is large; the business is practically a new thing here. Only a few farms and few foxes. Just consider for a moment. There are approximately 110,000,000 people in the United States today, and each year shows a steady increase. These people like to live well; they make money and spend it freely. They want the best automobile and jewels that money can buy, and the best furs as well. They realize that they are going this way but once and try to get the most out of life as they go along. There are a great many rich people and what do a few silver fox skins amount to with them? Yet how many genuine silver fox furs do you see on the street? During my stay in the south during the past winter, I did not see one silver fox fur worn, except by my wife and daughter, by the thousands of ladies in all the fashionable resorts I visited, but I did see a great many who would like to have them, and no doubt some day will.

There is a desire by this class of people to wear something that is distinctive and uncommon, and the lady who goes out on the street with such furs knows full well that she will be envied by all. They are worn by the nobility in England and France, and are a mark of distinction, because the silver fox fur is the most valuable in the world. The reason it is so costly is because it is a freak of nature, and cannot be successfully imitated. A dyed skin with a few white hairs sewed in to imitate the silver, is very cheap looking and quite apparent even to the inexperienced eye.

\*“Besides, the world needs furs, and the world’s natural supply is becoming depleted at an alarming rate. As the population increases and new areas are opened up, the denizens of the forest and lonely places become pushed back farther beyond the pale of civilization. Once the annual harvest of furs outnumbers the increase, then the exhaustion of that natural resource has begun. And the trend toward exhaustion, while slight at first, becomes increasingly rapid. The problem of perpetuating the silver fox has been solved while others must go headlong to extinction and breeders have at last begun to offset the natural shrinkage. Thus in the near future it will have not only its own place to fill, but also that occupied now by others.”

*\*Silver Fox Farming.—F. L. Rogers.*





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