

Subsection 4.—Fur Farming.¹

Origin of Fur Farming Industry.—Since the early days of the fur trade, it has been the practice in Canada for trappers to keep foxes, caught in warm weather, alive until the fur was prime, and from this custom has arisen the modern industry of fur farming. The earliest authentic record of the raising of foxes in captivity comes from Prince Edward Island, where about forty-five years ago a number of foxes were raised on a farm near Tignish. The beauty of the fur of the silver fox and the consequent high prices realized from the sale of the pelts, caused attention to be directed chiefly to this breed, a colour phase of the common red fox, which has been established through selective breeding carried on by the pioneer fox farmers. After 1890 there came a period of rising prices for furs, and the fox farming industry grew rapidly in Prince Edward Island. In 1913 an enumeration by the Provincial Commissioner of Agriculture showed 277 fox farms in that province, with a total of 3,130 foxes.¹ While experiments were being carried on in Prince Edward Island, attempts at raising foxes in captivity were also being made in other provinces, the records showing that foxes were successfully bred in Quebec in 1898, in Ontario in 1905 and in Nova Scotia in 1906. In 1912 and 1913 the Commission of Conservation conducted an exhaustive inquiry into the history and possibilities of fur farming in Canada, the resulting data, published in 1913, gave an impetus to the industry.² The Prince Edward Island Silver Fox Breeders' Association was formed in 1915, and the Canadian Silver Fox Breeders' Association in 1920. Fox farming is now carried on in all provinces of the Dominion and the number of farms is steadily increasing. The recognition of the importance of fox farming as a branch of the live stock industry is indicated by the addition, during 1925, to the system of Dominion experimental farms and stations (as shown on page 216 of this volume) of an experimental fox ranch at Summerside in Prince Edward Island, where the fox farmer's problems of breeding, feeding, housing and general care can be specially studied.

Although the fox has proved the most suited to domestication, other kinds of fur-bearing wild animals are being raised in captivity—mink, raccoon, skunk, marten, fisher and rabbit. Karakul sheep, from which are obtained the furs known as "persian lamb", "astrachan" and "broadtail", are also being raised successfully in Canada. Mink farms are the most numerous of the miscellaneous class, raccoon farms coming next. A few of the fox farms also raise miscellaneous fur-bearing animals in addition to the foxes.

Subsection 5.—Dairying Statistics.

Dairying is one of the oldest and is now one of the most important industries of Canada. The first permanent introduction of cows into Canada was undoubtedly made by Champlain at Quebec between 1608 and 1610. In 1629 he had 60 to 70 cattle on his farm at Cap Tourmente. In 1660, Colbert, the great French Minister, sent to New France representatives of the best dairy cows of Normandy and Brittany. In 1667 there were 3,107 head of cattle in New France and in 1671 866 in Acadia. The first cattle in what is now Ontario were taken thither by La Motte Cadillac in 1701. In 1823 a herd of 300 cattle was driven north to the Red River Settlement and sold to settlers, while cattle in British Columbia date from 1837. Modern dairying owes its development and expansion to the factory system for the making of cheese and butter, to the introduction of the centrifugal cream separator

¹As the statistics of the fur farms in Canada are not yet available for 1927, the reader is referred to pages 260 and 261 of the 1927-28 Year Book for the latest available figures.

²Fur Farming in Canada, by J. Walter Jones, B.A., B.S.A., Commission of Conservation, Ottawa, second edition revised and enlarged, 1914.