



There was a slow and steady increase in the number of fur farms until 1920 when 587 were reported, followed by a period of more rapid growth from 1920 to 1938 when the number reached 10,454. After the outbreak of hostilities in 1939 and the loss of the London and other European markets, prices declined; many fur farms went out of production. Though prices rose considerably after the War, operating costs also increased and the number of fur farms, particularly those conducted in conjunction with other farming operations, continued to decrease. By 1952, only 2,518 reported but, despite this decrease in number, volume of production has been maintained.

Though the earliest and most intensive fur-farming operations were concerned with fox-raising in the Maritime Provinces and Quebec, the sharp decline in the popularity of fox furs and the steady rise in mink resulted in Ontario and Western Canada taking predominant positions in the raising of fur animals. A distribution of the 306,523 animals on fur farms at Dec. 31, 1952, showed 14 p.c. in British Columbia, 48 p.c. in the Prairie Provinces, 25 p.c. in Ontario, 8 p.c. in Quebec and 5 p.c. in the Maritime Provinces.

Furs have for centuries been used for clothing and adornment and the demands of fashion, encouraging the development of new colour phases in fox and mink, have been an important incentive to the fur-farming industry. There have always been mink mutations in the wild state but these unusual animals stood little chance of survival and such pelts were exceedingly rare. Starting with wild-caught mink, breeders have, by cross-breeding, produced mink furs in a variety of colours. Among