

a strong demand developed during 1964 for silver and mutation fox furs. Price realizations reflected this interest and in recent fur auctions returns were the highest in almost twenty years. It remains to be seen whether this demand will be sustained.

Mink.—In 1963 the production of 1,390,139 mink pelts from 1,475 Canadian farms accounted for 99.1 p.c. of the value of fur farm production. This industry is carried on in all the provinces, the principal producers, in order of importance, being Ontario, British Columbia, Manitoba and Alberta. The following figures indicate the growth of the industry since 1930:—

Year	Pelt Production		Average Realization	Year	Pelt Production		Average Realization
	No.	\$			No.	\$	
1930.....	3,284	10.52		1955.....	786,760	20.07	
1935.....	30,558	10.58		1960.....	1,203,853	14.03	
1940.....	229,202	9.64		1961.....	1,271,449	14.50	
1945.....	255,968	21.51		1962.....	1,295,672	15.13	
1950.....	589,352	17.08		1963.....	1,390,139	15.82	

Initially, all ranches mink were brown or dark brown in colour, produced through crosses of various strains of wild mink. However, around 1936 the first colour mutation occurred—the Silverblu or Platinum, produced from conventional dark brown parents. This mutation was quickly followed by others and breeders soon learned to produce new exciting colours, so that today there exist more than 200 shades, including variations of basic colours. The wide range of natural colours available in mink has been a major factor in the continued popularity of this fur.

The raising of mink has developed into a specialized business. The successful rancher must have a thorough knowledge of his animals' habits and requirements. Mink must be fed a carefully prepared diet tailored to meet the varying demands of the breeding, growing and furring-out seasons. Also, a sound understanding of the complex field of genetics is required for selective breeding programs through which new shades may be produced and breeding herds improved. Most of the pelts produced today are far superior in size, colour and quality to those produced in the early days of the industry. Diseases of mink have been the subject of considerable research at universities and at the Canada Department of Agriculture Experimental Fur Farm at Summerside, P.E.I. As a result of findings, most mink farmers carry out programs of preventive vaccination for control of the major diseases.

Although mink has long remained the dominant fur of the industry, steadily increasing world production of mink pelts has resulted, in recent years, in lower auction realizations. Improved ranching practices and the use of labour-saving devices have enabled producers to operate more efficiently and have helped to mitigate the worst effects of the profit squeeze occasioned by reduced returns and rising costs of operation. On early mink farms the mink were raised in individual pens in the open. Feed and water had to be carried to the mink and this limited to around 300 the number of animals that could be cared for by one operator. Today mink are raised in roofed structures with more or less open sides, housing up to several thousand animals each, and most modern operations use automatic watering and powered feeding systems.

Most Canadian mink ranchers are members of the Canada Mink Breeders' Association, which promotes Canadian ranches mink in the domestic and foreign markets and works closely with fur auction outlets in formulating plans for marketing the annual pelt crop. Funds for advertising and for promotional undertakings are obtained through a deduction of 1½ p.c. of the sales price of all members' pelts sold at auction.

Chinchilla.—Chinchillas are being raised successfully in all provinces, the principal producers in 1963, in order of importance, being Ontario, British Columbia, Alberta and Quebec. Although chinchillas adapt well to raising under domestic conditions, this is a