

Mink farming, which had its beginnings in Canada around 1910, is now carried on in all 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	1960.....	1,203,853	14.03
1935.....	30,558	10.58	1961.....	1,271,449	14.50
1940.....	229,202	9.64	1962.....	1,295,672	15.13
1945.....	255,968	21.51	1963.....	1,400,021	15.82
1950.....	589,352	17.08	1964.....	1,418,368	14.92
1955.....	786,760	20.07			

Production in 1964 was 1.3 p.c. higher than in the previous year but, because of poorer market conditions, the value was down 4.4 p.c.

The mink breeding season extends from early March to early April. After a gestation period varying from 40 to 70 days, the litter of three to six kits is born. At age five to six months, the mink are fully grown and at this stage receive all possible attention with a view to developing deep, silky pelts which will bring top prices. Pelting starts around mid-November and by the end of that month shipments of raw pelts begin arriving at the fur auction houses. Mink farming has become a specialized business that calls for a high degree of skill, experience and industry. The successful breeder 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 breeding herds may be improved and new colours produced. Diseases of mink have been the subject of considerable research, as a result of which most mink farmers now carry out programs of preventive vaccination for control of the major diseases.

Advanced ranching practices and the use of labour-saving devices enable the producer to operate very efficiently, permitting a single operator to tend many animals. Mink are usually housed in roofed structures with more or less open sides. These sheds may contain up to several thousand animals each and the regular pattern of the pens within the structure facilitates the use of automatic watering and powered feeding systems. Even so, production costs in the 1960-64 period showed considerable increase and mink pelt prices failed to keep pace. One result of the lower profit margins has been an acceleration of the trend toward large producing units and the decline in the numbers of small operators producing fewer than 100 pelts a year. In 1950 there were 589,352 mink pelts produced on 2,557 farms, an average of 230 pelts per unit; in 1960 there were 1,203,853 mink pelts produced on 2,331 farms, an average of 516 per unit; and by 1964 the number of mink farms had declined to 1,491 but pelt production increased to 1,418,368, an average of 951 per farm.

Chinchillas are being raised successfully in all provinces, the principal producers in 1964, in order of importance, being British Columbia, Ontario, Quebec and Alberta. Most of the Canadian chinchilla pelts are exported in the raw state to the United States where they are dressed before being offered for sale. The pelts are sold through two outlets in New York City and most of the Canadian skins are intersorted with pelts produced in the United States. This arrangement benefits producers in both countries since the resulting larger quantities render it possible for the grading specialists to make up "lots"