



The American Rabbit
and
Cavy Breeders Association
(INCORPORATED)

GUIDE BOOK
AND
STANDARD

1928 - 1929

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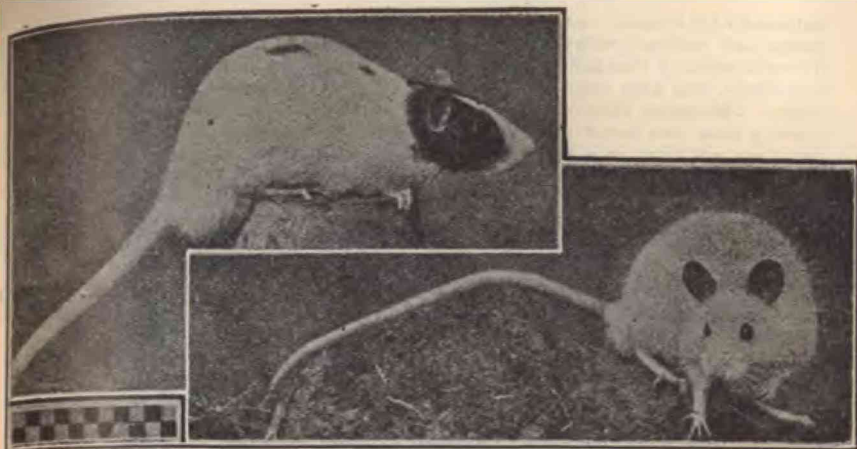
A. WEYGANDT, SECRETARY

7408 Normal Ave.

CHICAGO, ILL., U. S. A.

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RAT FARMING

Philadelphia's Wister Institute, part of the University of Pennsylvania, specializes in breeding white rats, cousin of the gray rat, not ordinary sewer rats, that carried plague.

The rats live and breed in a special rat establishment costing \$60,000 and are shipped to scientific bodies all over the world, including Japan, that scientists may work on "standardized rats," and compare results satisfactorily.

The rats live, die and submit to disease infection, knowing as little as human beings about the why or wherefore. Little do they dream that their tissues, structure, growth and digestive processes happen to resemble those of men, and that they breed, live, die only to save a higher race from death. Even so, they know as much as we do about primal causes and final purposes.

Many do not realize the good these animals do for the human race and I am pleased to give my method of care and feeding.

I find sugar cases make ideal breeding cages for rats, and I make them on the same design as the rabbit hutch. I make the front to take out in one piece, the bottom board being 4 in. to 5 in. deep, and to this is hinged a framework 2x½ in., which is covered with perforated tin or zinc, which I consider is warmer than wire netting. When complete, the whole can be taken out for cleaning, also at feeding time the bottom board keeps the youngsters from falling out of the box. I fix a shelf 4 inches wide across the box at the back, about 4 inches from the top. This I find gives the stock exercise, also they like to lie on it when resting. I also put in a few ventilation holes, 1½ inches in diameter, covered with zinc, they being at the back, near the top. These give the air a free circulation. I do not favor nest boxes, for the reason that if there is a scarcity of ventilation the rats' breath condenses, with the result the bedding becomes wet, and this causes rough ears and tails; for this reason also, I do not give any bedding unless the doe is ready to kindle. I give plenty of clean dry sawdust and clean out twice a week. Where there is bedding given I find the rats carry all their soft food into this and it becomes wet, the result being rough ears and tail. Another cause of rough ears is the want of cooling food for the blood, the blood being overheated. Give plenty of green food, dandelions, carrots, turnips, broccoli leaves, new grass, any of which are readily eaten up and the rats seem to enjoy them. When such are not available, a little flowers of sulphur mixed in the soft food is very beneficial.

I feed my rats exactly the same as my mice, viz., best whole white oats and wheat equal parts for corn, stale bread soaked in cold water, then squeeze

out most of the water and dry off with a little poultry meal, making it crumbly moist and not too sticky, or it soon becomes sour, and injurious if eaten. There is nothing like handling the stock. I handle the babies as soon as they run about, and they soon get to know that I do not intend to do them any harm. This gains their confidence, with the result that they look for it each feeding time and never get wild or shy. Where many make the mistake, is that they put them in a box and then throw in the food and bang the door to lest they should escape. The result is that in a few days the rats, instead of looking for you and hearing your cheery voice at feeding time, dash about and try to get as far away as possible; thus the budding novice gets fed up and clears out, the fault being all his own, through mismanagement.

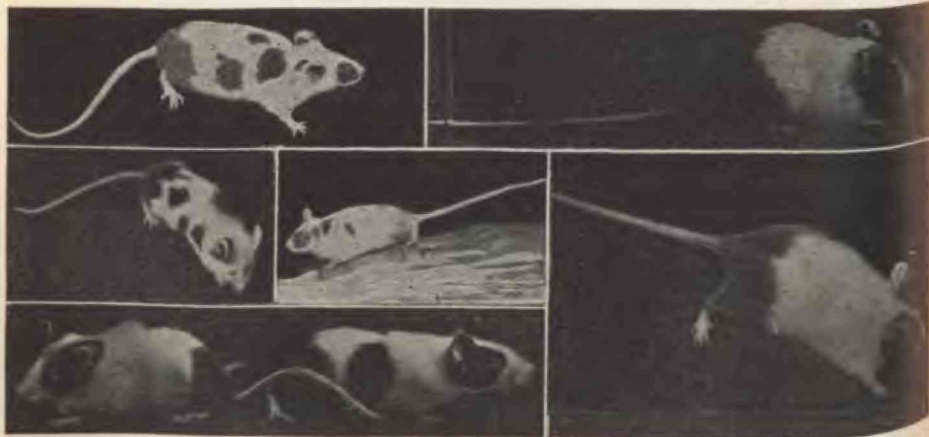
Visitors who see my stock invariably say: "Oh! how beautifully clean and tame they are; I thought they were like the wild rats." The chief point to watch is cleanliness, free from damp and draught, and not kept in too exposed a position. If the rats should develop a slight cold, which is noticed by the peculiar whistling and wheezing, especially in damp, foggy weather, a few drops of eucalyptus oil and spirits of camphor, mixed and put in the corners of the box, will soon effect a cure. Should the rough ears and tails turn up, make an ointment from a bit of leaf fat (pork) without salt, rendered down and dried off with a little flowers of sulphur. A few dressings will effect a cure, and if they eat any of it, it will do them no harm. I find rats very immune from disease, and the death rate is not one per cent.

One very good feature is you can keep any number of adult bucks together as they will agree, and you can add to or reduce the number any time, and they do not fight. This also applies to the does, whereas with adult buck mice it is murder to put strange adults together. A rat can be trained by a child to become a most interesting and intelligent pet, to my personal knowledge.

MICE FARMING

Raising mice for the fancy as well as commercial purposes can be made a paying proposition and there is a great demand for them for experimental work in laboratories at present, and considering space required they are profitable.

Another advantage over other animals is that mice can be kept almost anywhere, so long as they are free from draught, which is their worst enemy. If you have an outhouse of any description, so much the better; if not, they



Fancy Mice

can be kept in the cellar, the attic, a spare bedroom, or even in the coal-place. When the prospective breeder has settled where he or she is going to keep the stock, he must decide as to the kind of breeding cage he is going to use. I favor a box 18 in. long, 9 in. deep, and 9 in. wide, with a partition 6 in. from one end to provide a nest box, and two holes cut in the lid, as per sketch, for ventilation, and covered with gauze.

It is not even essential to go to such an expense as this, for a common dry soap box with lid, a hole cut in each end and covered with gauze, and partitioned for nest box, will do just as well, although it does not look so workmanlike.

The care of your stock is very simple, but they must receive regular attention. Clean the cages and give fresh hay at least once every week, twice if possible. Feed regularly, as the mice get to know when they should be fed, and regular feeding goes a long way towards keeping them in condition. It does not really matter whether you feed twice or once daily, but if you feed twice give them good sound oats and a little canary or millet seed at morning, and at night a little soaked bread, squeezed almost dry. If you are out at business all day, you may feed them at night only, giving them all their food at one time, but which ever way you start, continue in the same way.

Don't keep too many mice in one cage, as this not only causes a disagreeable smell, but soon puts the mice out of condition. An adult buck and two does are quite sufficient for a cage of the size mentioned above. When the does show signs of pregnancy take the buck away, and see that the does have an extra bit of soft food when you feed them. About five or six days after the youngsters arrive, they may be examined, and their number reduced to four or five in order that they may obtain proper nourishment from the mother, otherwise they will be weaklings when they mature and of very little use for breeding. Don't in-breed too much, as this tends to reduce the size and quality of the stock.

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 Gandrean, Jos., Box 53, North Dartmouth, Mass., Flemish, Black, Steel, Sandy Gray
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 Herman, F. A., 33 Nye Ave., Brockton, Mass., Flemish, New Zealand Reds.
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