

Twin Secrets of Cavy Keeping

Good Housing and Management

By C. V. B. Taylor

MR. H. BECKER writes: "About a month ago I bought ten Self white sows in kindle and a boar. I want to try to earn a bit of spare cash by breeding cavies for the waster trade. Previously I have kept rabbits and bantams, but this is my first attempt at guinea-pig keeping. Already I have had my first set-back, as two of the sows littered (four each) the day after their arrival and all the youngsters were stillborn, and to make matters worse, three more of the heavy in-kindle sows were found dead in the hutch this morning.

"Can you suggest any reason for these losses? I keep the cavies all running together on the floor of a small poultry shed which I have converted into a caviary. I feed them on swedes, stale crusts of bread and hay. Is this all right?"

The feeding mentioned by my correspondent is not on too generous lines, because he does not mention any greenstuff, and cavies are lost without a few cauliflower leaves or even cabbage leaves. I have perhaps been fortunate during the past winter as I have been able to get a weekly supply from my greengrocer, and it does help to keep cavies fit till the fresh grass and other wild herbage comes along.

Then there are some good washes to be made from small potatoes and peelings mixed with the bran ration till crumbly moist. These additional winter items do help the hay. It is possible that the fall journey upset the sows that kindled so soon after arrival, especially if they were all sent together in one box, without any division, for no matter how much space is allowed, cavies will insist on crowding together at one end of a box, unless they are partitioned off. Heavy-in-kindle sows are then liable to get damaged in such a way as to cause injury fatal to themselves, or cause an abortion.

Management itself may be at fault in my correspondent's case, for you will note that the cavies are not separated in any way, but are kept running together on the shed floor. If one of the sows littered, it may have caused the other to abort its young.

I advise Mr. Becker to remove the boar, and place the in-kindle sows in separate hutches. There are times, I know, when cavies are kept on the colony system. They live together as a happy family and losses are few and far between, but I consider it best to remove sows to separate small hutches about a fortnight before they are due to kindle. I also admit I have, when pushed for room, let a couple of pregnant sows run together, and when one of them has littered, the other has assisted in the cleaning of the youngsters, but at other times a different story has to be told.

Be sure to remove the boar before sows kindle in any case, because when a sow farrows, he will not leave her in peace, and she will mate again immediately, so you see there is a danger of scattered dead youngsters and a very unwise further mating if the boar is allowed to remain in the same hutch. I fail to see how it can be a wise policy to let a sow be carrying a second litter whilst she is attending to the wants of her first family. Do not treat your cavies as machines.

Reply to B. M. McMillan: Sorry I cannot put you in touch with a laboratory or similar institution for the disposal of your surplus stock. By your description the cavies are a cross between Abyssinians and Peruvians. Your feeding methods are quite good. Sawdust for the hutch floors absorbs the moisture quite effectively.

CAVIES IN AMERICA

By Jack Ball
SAN JOSE, CALIFORNIA.

HERE in America the cavy shows are starting up again. The San Gabriel Cavy Breeders' Association of California sponsored a cavy show in Bakersfield, California on 15 and 16 March. There were 71 cavies at the show, which was considered a good entry. Mr. Vernon Craig won several ribbons and took best Peruvian with his magnificent Peruvian cavy.

The same club will sponsor another show on 5 and 6 April, at Santa Ana, California. Cups will be offered for the best American, the best Abyssinian, and the best Peruvian, along with another cup for the best opposite sex Peruvian. There will be a special cup for the best Agouti, with both Silver and Golden Agoutis competing. A pair of Racing Homer pigeons will be given for the best Chocolate cavy. With all these

excellent prizes, and all the fine cavies we have in California, this should prove to be a very good show.

Some very good cavies are being bred and raised in California. For instance, there are the excellent Peruvians of Mr. Vernon Craig, of Los Angeles, the very fine Red Americans and White Americans raised by Mr. J. E. Love of Compton, California, and some of the finest Red Dutch cavies in the country are being bred by Mr. A. B. Scheer of La Crescenta. Some very good Abyssinians are also being raised in the States.

On top of this, the biggest cavy show (in importance) in the United States will be held this year in nearby Portland, Oregon. This will give the California fanciers a chance to show what they can do.

The laboratory market in the United States is very good at the present. Again,

NATIONAL MOUSE CLUB NOTES AND NEWS

The Fancy Past and Present

Mouse Show Calendar

19 April.—Rotherham (Spring Cup).
3 May.—Calder Valley.

ANECDOTES and reminiscences are always interesting, and with this in mind I approached Mr. Percy Ashley to give a review on the mouse Fancy from early days and compare it with the present. As is known, Mr. Ashley is one of our oldest members. His membership dates back to 1908, and, apart from during the first world war, has never been relinquished. Admittedly he has been in and out of the Fancy, mainly in, but never has he ceased to have a love and affection for the Longtails.

"I propose to undertake the task allotted to me by Mr. Johnson in two chapters. First, I will deal with the Fancy. It is now over 50 years since I first became interested in fancy mice and it can, therefore, be said that I have a good idea of how the Fancy is faring at present compared with the past.

"The National Mouse Club has been in existence for 57 years, and much longer, therefore, than most fur clubs. There is not the slightest doubt that we have progressed a long way since the club was inaugurated. Unlike most fur sections, the mouse Fancy has never had excessive boom periods. It has, of course, had times which were better than others, but generally speaking it has been a case of progress and steady plodding.

"In the early days, it was a difficult job to get mouse classes included in show schedules and then only with 'cap in hand.' Today, we have no trouble at all to get mice included and if need be, the Fancy can and does run its own shows. Throughout the whole of my membership of the club, there have always been mouse fanciers prepared to run a show. As an example, during the war we did not close down but adjusted the cogs of the mouse machine and held a series of shows, roughly one a month, in all parts of the country which were undoubtedly a great success. As a result, the Fancy, even in wartime made progress. When the war was over, the normal working of our Fancy was resumed and, as a result of its wartime activities, it could hold grand shows with plenty of entries and a galaxy of club members.

"How does the mouse Fancy fare today when most sections are crying out for entries? It is, in my opinion, sitting pretty. The average entries at shows nowadays are around about 15 per class. This leaves a good return for both the show promoters and the exhibitors, for the prize money is usually 6/-, 4/-, 2/- for 1/- entry.

"There is, however, another point, namely that one can send six mice to show for the price of one rabbit. Compared with the rabbit Fancy, our prize money is generous, and 1/- entry fee tends to keep our Fancy a real hobby. In this respect, the Fancy has never altered. The mouse Fancy was instituted as "a Fancy," and has remained so. Admittedly, there have been a few breeders (only a few), who have come in and tried to make the Fancy a business, but without success.

"How are we faring today as regards stock? I should say that there are more fanciers keeping and exhibiting stock than ever. What I cannot account for is the percentage of exhibitors relative to membership. This, however, is not as great as it used to be. I can only conclude that many people like to keep mice as a hobby and seek the fellowship of the N.M.C. without being

the California breeders are in on the ground floor. The Eastern States had a very severe winter this year, so all the Eastern laboratories are ordering their cavies from the breeders in the Western States, due to the lack of cavies in the East. The Western States had a fairly mild winter, so we have plenty of cavies to sell. The market is so good, that most of the breeders are pushing their stock extra hard in order to try to fill the large orders. Some laboratories want as many as 2,000 cavies in a single month, and most of the others are asking for all the cavies that can be spared for the rest of the summer. The current prices are quite good, and this boom for cavies should prove very profitable.

It seems that the whole country has suddenly become "cavy conscious," as there are reports that many of the Fancy breeding and young stock is being bought.

With all this buying of cavies and the new interest in them, the cavy shows should have larger entries than ever this year. After all, it only costs a little money to send prize cavies to a show, and the reward is so great. If every person could send just three or four cavies to at least one show this year, I am sure the entries would be very good, and the interest in fancy cavies heightened.

In my next article on "Cavies in America," I hope to have more complete results on the Bakersfield show, and all the results on the Santa Ana show. Until then keep on raising your cavies with the intention of breeding a winner.

been on exhibiting. I have made this point because several members regularly come to see me who have not as yet entered the list of exhibitors. And yet here is the main point. They are brimful of enthusiasm and interest. I can only trust they will branch out later on the show bench.

"Is the Fancy as sound and as united as in days gone by? The answer on a broad basis is yes, but with over 400 members it cannot be expected that they will all see eye to eye. It would, in fact, be a bad day if such a thing happened.

"I have been a member of many societies and from my experience, it can safely be said that mouse fanciers 'agree to differ' in a more amicable spirit than others. In this is the secret of the mouse Fancy's success. From time to time, there have been differences of opinion and arguments, but in the end everything has been thrashed out and the episode forgotten. That is why, in my opinion, we have over the years always had a healthy, united and sound club. May it remain so.

"Our founder, the late Mr. Walter Maxey, was a man with the courage of his own convictions, and possessed sterling qualities. One of Mr. Maxey's oft-repeated prophecies was that mice would eventually become a factor to be reckoned with in the small livestock world. How right he was. I can remember some wonderful times spent in his company. He did not have any conception of the Mendel theory, but he knew what it took to create a good mouse.

"In the early days, we who kept mice were looked upon as childish, cranks or even insane. It has, however, often been said that the difference between insanity and genius is very little. A question which might be asked is whether the type of people interested in fancy mice has altered since those early days. I do not think so. We have always had people from all walks of life. And many who were at the top in other spheres.

"The main difference which I see in the Fancy is the extension of duplicate classes. This, in my opinion, has been a marked step forward. Our judges are just the same. They have always judged for the love of judging and their fee remains, on the whole, a mere 'thank you.'

"Summarised, the mouse Fancy has retained all its good points, eradicated most of the bad ones and added some good ones. We have indeed progressed since the early days of the mouse Fancy, and it has been grand to march along with such a fine body of people."

HAVE you made your entries for the National Mouse Club's Spring Cup show at Rotherham, on Saturday, 19 April? Mr. C. E. Peters, 82 Lowfield Avenue, Greasborough, Rotherham is waiting. As one who has been in constant correspondence with Mr. Peters, I know him to be a man of sterling worth who is anxious to give of his best for the mouse Fancy. He is backed by several fellow-members, and stock at Rotherham on 19 April will be in good hands. Several cups will be up for competition, but even a "commended" card at a club show is something of merit. Let Mr. Peters have every possible entry, out of regard for the work he is carrying out on our behalf.

C. H. JOHNSON, Hon. Sec.,
"Highfield," Driffield, Yorks.

LONGTAIL WINNERS AT DRIFFIELD

Considering the short notice given for Driffield show, the entry of 620, on 22 March, was remarkably good. The task was a heavy one for two judges. Classes were big, and quality in most cases good. Thanks to my two stewards, who did a hard day's work.—R.W.

Mr. R. Ward's Classes

TAN.—CHAM., SILVER OR DOVE, 23: 1 Johnson, Cham. doe, a shade dark, good tan, very good type; 2 Ashley, Cham., level top, just beaten tan; 3 Holland Bros., Silver, good shade top, good tan, beaten feet; 1 Marriott, 8 WKS., 16: 1 3 Ashley, Dove doe, beautiful level top, no light nose here, rich tan, sound feet, lovely condition; 3rd Dove, only a baby, should make a good adult, lovely top colour; 2 Simpkins, Cham. doe, shade dark on top, rich tan; r Ford, A.O.C., 21: 1 Ashley, Black Tan, good top colour, exceptional feet, well shown; 2 Day, typy Cham., good top and tan, very close to winner; 3 Kellett, unusual exhibit, Silver Grey Tan, lovely exhibit, hard lines to be in such a strong class, beautiful top, dead level nose to tail, falls tan, may make up better with age, very attractive; r Esley, 8 WKS., 21: 1 Ashley, Black doe, good top and tan, lovely feet, splendid condition; 2 G. Smith, Chocolate doe, rich top colour and tan, feet quite good for this variety; 3 Esley, Black, good top and feet, beaten tan, CHALL., 33: 1, 2, 3 Ashley; r Johnson.

AGOUTI OR CINNAMON.—14: 1, r Lockwood, Cinnamon doe, level, good ticking, sound feet, good under; 2 Watts, rich coloured Agouti, good ticking, very close; 3 Ashley, Cinnamon doe, good colour and feet, beaten ticking. CHINCHILLA OR FOX.—11: 1 Johnson, Fox doe, good top and under, good ticking; 2 Watts, Fox, not quite so good under; 3 Marsden, Chin. buck, good top colour, not pure enough under; r Robinson, a really good Chinchilla in this class was put back for head shaking, 8 WKS., 11: 1 Roy, Fox, lovely top and ticking, good condition; 2 Thackeray, Chin. doe, level top, could be better under; 3 Carr, Fox doe, patchy top; r Batty, A.O.V., 12: An interesting class to judge five varieties, including Astrex, 1 Forbes, a very good Sable, richest colour in this variety for some time, under as rich as any Red, very attractive; 2 Heywood, Pearl, very pretty example of this scarce variety, hard lines to meet such an outstanding Sable, a bit out of condition to-day; 3 Kellett, Silver Grey, well silvered, a shade dark nose; r Johnson, 8 WKS., 15: Another mixed grill, full of quality, some good mice, careless, 1 Kellett, very pretty Silver Grey, dead level from nose to tail; 2 Lockwood, Cinnamon, rich colour, level ticking, sound feet; 3 Higgs, Agouti doe, well ticked, beaten feet, little in these three; r Yeaton, A.O.V., CHALL.: 1 Lockwood; 2 Kellett; 3 Watts; r Roy, STUD BUCK, 23: 1 Walker, Cham.; 2 Fletcher, P.E.W.; 3 Moore; r Day, DOE, 32: 1 pen 151; 2 Marriott; 3 Ashley; r Watts, JUVENILE: 1 Marsden; 2 Yeaton; 3 Olliffe; r Holland Bros, GRAND CHALL., 31: 1 Marriott; 2 Ashley; 3 Moore; r Lockwood.—R. WARD.

Mrs. A. Plant's Classes

SELF, WHITE, 15: 1 Patchett, shapely, good colour; 2 Lockwood, good, little parts them; 3 Walker, not the shape in head, 8 WKS., 18: 1 Lockwood, a lovely doe, as near perfect as I have seen; 2 Downs, good, beaten eye and head; 3 Fletcher, good, same fault. BLACK AND BLUE.—15: 1, 2 Johnson, a good Black; both very good, first best shape; 3 Day, beaten under, 8 WKS., 11: 1 Simpkins, good, young buck, should make up well; 2 Johnson, very good buck, falls under; 3 Watts, Blue, even in colour, a pity to meet the Blacks, but it held its own. CHAM. OR FAWN.—21: What a class! 1 Marriott, good doe; 2 3 Walker, very good buck, level colour; 3rd doe, not so fit as buck, 8 WKS.; 1 Day, doe, pleasing shade, level; 2 Thackeray, buck, should make up well; 3 Marriott, doe, sound in colour, very good, A.O.C., 12: 1 Tindle, Cream, good shape and lovely eye; 2 Johnson, Silver doe, good type and size; 3 Cash, Red, good colour, small, 8 WKS., 10: 1, 2 Johnson, Silver doe, good colour, size and type; 2nd doe, little darker than winner; 3 Tindle, a Black-Eyed Cream, good head and eye, CHALL., 33: 1 Marriott; 2 Johnson; 3 Lockwood; r Tindle, 8 WKS., 39: 1 Lockwood; 2 Simpkins; 3 Day; r Johnson, DUTCH.—9: 1 Gregory, Black, good head, slight dip, but wins, good colour; 2 Davison, Dove, lovely baby, slight run under, very pleasing; 3 Gregory, Black doe, wavy under, out one cheek, very good. EVEN, BROKEN OR VARIEGATED.—11: 1 Moore, 6 Spot Broken, but good colour, real spots; 2 Coles and Son, Broken doe, spots not so good or clean as winner; 3 Harrison, Variegated doe, well splashed on top, under a trifle brindle marked. CHALLENGE, 9: 1 Moore; 2 Gregory; 3 Davison. GRAND CHALL., 8 WKS.: 1 Lockwood; 2 r Ashley; 2 Simpkins.—(Mrs.) A. PLANT.

Specialist Clubs Invited

Far Cotton and Dallington R.C. will hold its open pen show on 6 Dec. Will any specialist show club secretary who would like to hold a club show in conjunction please contact Mr. S. W. Adams, 18, Bective Road, Kingsthorpe, Northampton?