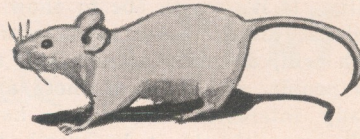


FANCY MICE



SHIPPING MICE - RATS

By M. HARTMAN, *New City, N. Y.*

BOTH rats and mice can be shipped from one end of the country to the other with perfect safety if they are properly boxed. On the other hand, if improperly boxed, a few hours on the road will place them in a condition beyond recovery. The size of the box to use will depend upon the number of mice to be shipped. However, I would not advise the use of one with less than 40 square inches of floor space, even for one pair of mice. This would also accommodate six or eight mice on short trips and four on long trips. The best plan would be to allow 40 square inches of floor space for the first pair and then allow from two to four square inches for every mouse added. That, of course, is according to the length of the journey they are to take.

As to the depth of the box, I would not advise over six inches. When you are ready to ship, fill the bottom with shavings, and don't be afraid to use it freely, at the same time leave some room for the occupants. This gives them something to take hold of and there will be no danger of them being thrown up against the side of the box or against each other.

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RED MICE

Of the forty-odd varieties of mice which fanciers have succeeded in developing, none is more attractive than the Red. To describe the color in words is not easy, but perhaps it may be compared to the bright red color of the common fox, or of an Irish setter. There are reds and reds: from the deep, clear color fit for the show bench, to the faint, reddish tint, not worthy of being called red. In addition, reds are found with a sooty smudge, particularly on the back of the head; but once a good Red has been seen, there will never be any doubt as to the correct color, which should be deep, clear, bright, not dull, and without sooty marks of any kind. The only safe way to begin with this variety is to purchase from a stud where good reds are to be found as a matter of course. Even then as in all varieties, some will be better than others; but red breeding mice from a first-class stud, will be found to produce others, some of which will be better than the parents.

Reds have several peculiar characteristics, which need to be understood:

1. They are not true breeding: that is, if two reds are bred together, there will be found in the litter, not only reds, but also, and ALWAYS, mice of another color—agouti, cinnamon, or chocolate. Reds therefore always carry another color as a recessive and the absolutely pure-bred young die in the nest after a few days, and may be distinguished from the others by their pale color. The Reds which survive, then, are always crossbred, carrying one of the colors named as a recessive. My original Reds from England carried both agouti and cinnamon, but I have found that by retaining the cinnamon alone, clearer Reds have resulted, whereas the agouti strain produced sooty Reds. In building up a strain, it is permissible to cross cinnamon with red; but once enough Reds are produced for breeding purposes, it is better to breed red to red all the time, as a constant crossing with cinnamon, if persisted in, tends to produce light Reds.

2. Reds are noted for possessing small ears, and short tails, but, with care, these defects may be removed by breeding from those which have larger ears and longer tails. While bearing in mind that with Reds, as with all self-colored mice, color is the most important point, do not sacrifice good ears and tails. At present, the writer possesses only one Red with a short tail, and all his stock have fair ears, though with Reds, these are seldom as large as are usually found in the other varieties. By selecting the Reds with the best color, having at the same time good or fair ears and tail, it is possible to eradicate the small ears and short tails the Red has by nature. So far, no suitable outcross that can be used with Reds has been found. While cinnamons may be used, as indicated, these red bred cinnamons fail in ticking, but will produce excellent young, with proper ticking, when crossed with chocolate.

In common with all mice containing what is called the tan factor—sables, creams, etc.—Reds have a decided tendency to become fat and unshapely, if overfed, or fed unsuitably. When this happens, they are unable to breed; and while some authorities are of opinion that they thus become permanently sterile, my own experience leads me to believe this is not so, but that they can be brought back again into breeding condition.

I had known for some time that laboratories used wheat germ extract to encourage fertility in rabbits and cavies, but this was bought in large quantities, and apparently in liquid form, and not in the pellet form so convenient for the fancier. Now, having tried Reds with Reds for months, and Reds with another variety buck four more months, without results, I immediately began to use pellets, at the same time cutting down resolutely on the Reds' food. To my delight, in another month, one Red doe had a litter of five of the finest young mice I had ever seen, all of which turned out to be sables. When these were three weeks old, I bred her again to another buck, chocolate and tan this time, and got a better litter, containing several cinnamon tans, and one Red buck, which later was to win the "Patapouf" trophy for best Red or Fawn at a Boston Show.—R. W. F.