### Mice-Capades

By P. Denuine

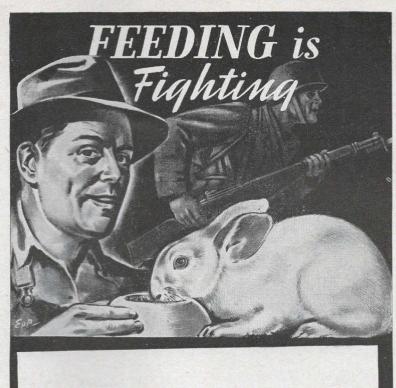
MOST fanciers usually have no idea how interesting another fancier's hobby can be. I know that was my case for as a bird fancier I had always looked on mouse fanciers with considerable amusement; no longer, however, for a pair of plain ordinary white mice presented me some time ago by a friend have provided me with an astonishing amount of real pleasure.

True mouse fanciers might well be horrified at the conditions, diet, etc., under which my mice are kept. They live in bird cages, nest in a hanging basket, bathe frequently, eat bird seed and dog biscuits; yet they live and thrive and multiply with unbelievable rapidity!

The bird-cage home of my mice is one of those closely barred, chaletroofed, oriental finch cages. It was the only home I had available when they were given me so I popped them into it. The perches were left in, though I never really thought they would use them. But much to my surprise they were soon delightedly running up and down the sides of the cage and back and forth across the perches, taking time out now and again for a quick ride on the swing. I believe the exercise they get in this way accounts for the fact that the offspring which I raise are half again as large and twice as heavy as the original pair.

Already in the cage when they were put in was a small Indian-type woven grass basket, which was formerly the home and sleeping quarters of a pair of Orange-Breasted African Waxbill finches that had occupied the cage. This basket was hung in one corner. (I always use such baskets for small birds which had frequently rather sleep in such a nest than on the perch.) The mice, too, immediately took over this nest and soon had it half-filled with scraps of paper and little pieces of string. To see them carrying little pieces of paper up the sides of the cage and along the perches to their nest in the skies was really most comical.

Not having any mouse food (whatever that is) I fed them plain canary seed and dog biscuits soaked in milk. Evidently this food was eminently suitable for soon the nest contained 12 tiny, wiggling, bright red babies,



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looking for all the world like a mess of red beans come to life! These grew with astonishing rapidity and no sooner were they out of the nest and running around the aerial run-ways than the mother had a new batch. I put several more baskets in the top of the cage and soon many of the young had babies, too.

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#### THE RABBIT BUSINESS

THERE will probably be a good many who will start raising rabbits this year, some with a view of making it a profitable business, with others it will be just a passing fancy which may last only a few months.

There are some big mistakes that the inexperienced are likely to make, such as starting with inferior or diseased stock, breeding does before they have reached maturity, breeding them too often, allowing the doe to nurse and raise too large litters and weaning the young at too early an age. In other words, whoever goes into the rabbit business with the expectation of raising as many as they can in as short a time as possible will not produce stock of much value.

When animals are raised and kept in strict confinement as most domestic rabbits are, there is always more or less danger of disease in the rabbitry, and a precautionary program is always the best policy. Prevention is better than a cure in any animal industry, because cleaning up trouble after it has once started is sure to be more difficult and often makes more trouble and expense than the rabbit is worth.

The loss of young rabbits, if they continue to die, is most discouraging, especially to beginners, as many do not have the patience to continue, investigate and learn the cause of the trouble. There is not near the loss among young rabbits now that there was when I first started raising rabbits, twenty or more years ago. Stock in general seems to be more healthful, stronger and more resistant to disease.

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