

Small Animals

The Future of the Mouse Fancy

By R. W. FERRIER

THE Mouse fancy seems, at present, to be limited to those who breed mice merely as pets, or for laboratory purposes. This means the greatest pleasure of the fancy exhibiting—is lacking; and without shows at which there are classes for mice and rats, the greatest incentive to breed first-class specimens to a definite standard, largely disappears. Mouse fanciers who cannot exhibit the results of their care and skill in breeding, against specimens produced by their fellow fanciers, are apt to lose enthusiasm, give up the fancy as one that has no particular end or aim, and transfer their energies to another, for which shows are available. Breeding for exhibition is, in my experience, the life blood of any fancy. Remove the incentive for competing with others, and what remains? Simply, in the vast majority of cases, a tendency to relapse into careless mass breeding, leading to a

deterioration of stock. No fancy has ever gone very far unless its members have had opportunities, as frequent as possible, for exhibiting their stock.

I want to urge, therefore, on all mouse and rat breeders, the necessity for our getting our heads together, and organizing our fancy—the most economical and interesting I know—so that shows for mice and rats shall become a regular thing for us. I need hardly stress the advantages of the Mouse fancy: the small cost of getting started; the minimum of space required for a mousery; the quickness with which one can see the results of a mating; and the few months necessary before the young may themselves be used for breeding.

To indicate what might be done, let me give a few details of what is going on in Great Britain, the original home of the mouse fancy. The National Mouse and Rat Club has a membership of over four hundred, and grows weekly, while there are sectional or local mouse clubs by the dozen. The mouse fanciers of England put up a strenuous and sustained fight for the recognition of their fancy by show societies, and today they are reaping an abundant reward. Hardly a week goes by without their being able to exhibit, while a number of shows are held exclusively for mice and rats. It is amazing to read the reports of these, one of which has been held at Leeds for the last three years. The organizer, Mr. C. H. Johnson, has sent me a schedule of the show held this year on November 1st. This is a booklet of twelve pages, and in his foreword, Mr. Johnson refers to the record number of mice and rats exhibited at this one show in 1934. How many were there, you ask? No less than 1632. This year there are exactly 100 classes, prizes in each class ranging from three to seven in number, and from \$2.50 to

\$1.50 for first prize, according to the number of entries in a class. Special prizes, amount to \$150.00, with cups, spoons, medals, trios of mice, etc., galore, for other specials. This will indicate what we may do, in time, by mutual co-operation and support. Suppose we had a mouse show even every two months, and one or two great ones like that at Leeds, what a difference it would make to our fancy. No one who has not exhibited can realize what it means to send mice off to a show, and the thrill you get when they return, and you see the award cards. There is nothing just like it, as I know from years of experience.

What then can we do to remedy the present state of our mouse and rat Fancy? Well, first I would appeal to secretaries of live stock shows to give a few classes for mice, say, four to begin with; one each for self or solid colors; even-marked; uneven or broken marked; and any other variety. It is surprising how interested the visiting public can be in mice which are on exhibit. The cost of entry will be small, express on anything up to twenty mice low, and the pleasure of helping out a fine hobby will more than compensate for the slight expense involved. As a further saving, we could exhibit, for a time, in breeding cages, later turning to the proper type of show cage. Second, let every mouse fancier, where classes are provided send in even a few mice, so as to let show authorities see we are in earnest, and not wasting their time. Last of all, I suggest we form an American Mouse and Rat Club, making use of, at any rate to begin with, the rules and standards of the National Mouse Club, of Great Britain, altering and adapting them to suit our own conditions or needs. The British have been at the game so long that we might just as well profit by their accumulated experience. I know they will be the first to wish us the best of luck.

(EDITOR'S NOTE: Reverend Ferrier will be glad to communicate with other mouse fanciers. He may be reached at The Rectory, Elizabethtown, N. Y.)

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Cavy Suffers From Cut Prices

By RUSSELL L. CLARRY, Marietta, N. Y.

AT THIS time of the year the demand on covies always picks up as long as I can recall, and that is back fourteen years ago. Prices usually go up also at this time of the year and are best during our cold mid-winter months. Now is the correct time of the year to start breeding your covies if you wish to cash in the most profits during the time of the year when the demand and prices are best, and when the supply is the lowest.

However, reports have come to me from some breeders that many dealers in some of the large cities are offering as follows: 15 cents each for covies weighing 8 to 12 ounces, 20 cents each for covies weighing 12 to 16 ounces, and 25 cents each for covies weighing 18 ounces each and over. The shipper has to pay express on top of these cut-throat prices. Now, it is true many breeders are shipping in covies at these prices; as reports show, dealers are getting all they want at these prices, and really you breeders cannot blame the dealers as they are the ones that are making the money off your stock. However, it seems to me some of you breeders should be more willing to cooperate and hold back your stock and not flood the market with a lot of cheap stock at this time of the year; it only hurts your own reputation, as the old long-standing breeders find it out, and it never does you any good or gains any profits for you.

Further reports also show many of these breeders selling at give-away prices have other means of income and do not have to depend on covies for a living, as many of us do. I say from the bottom of my heart why don't such breeders be human enough to either quit the business or keep just a few for pets and let it go at that, instead of spoiling the market price for those who are really in the business as a business to try and earn a few extra dollars for groceries, clothes and things necessary to help support the wife and children.

I have many such letters asking me to write an article on this very

thing. I am in favor of helping anybody and everybody if they will just hold back their covies for a fair price—and believe any reader of this article will not disagree with me on my statements—only the dealers.

I am not blaming them; they can pay more than the 15 cent price, and will, if you breeders will hold back your stock.

It seems a shame a few would try and flood the market at this time of the year—who have means of earning their coal, groceries, etc., other than raising covies. The cavy breeders who are in the business as a business also cannot get their share of dollars from the profits they should get from their work and labor to buy the things they so badly need.

As soon as this cheap stock is used up, they will have to pay the price to get good and better stock. So keep your heads, hold off a while and watch the prices go up and the orders come in. I am not writing this article for my own benefit for I am protected anyhow on prices with many firms whom I have dealt with for many years, but I do know what's going on around and this article is written to enlighten.

Tumors in Mice

By S. P. HOLMAN, Fla.

HEREDITARY tumor is not uncommon among some strains of mice. The females only are affected by this growth, although the males may transmit the character to their daughters. Some years ago these mice were much in demand by laboratories but I have had no calls for them in a long time.

This type of tumor is not the same as cancer to the best of my knowledge although I find that the two transplantable types, Carcinoma and Sarcoma are usually referred to as "tumors".

Further information on the subject can be had, I am sure, from the Rockefeller Institute for Medical Research, 66th Street and Avenue A, New York City.

For information on mouse diseases in general I know of no better source than the section on pathological protozoa in Hans Zimmer's "A textbook on Bacteriology" published by Appleton, New York.

"Pathology and Differential Diagnosis by V. A. Moore, published by MacMillan Co., New York also contains data on the subject.

Mouse typhoid (Para typhoid) sometimes called diarrhoea is caused by *Bacillus typhi mium*. It is highly infectious and all animals showing signs of having it should be killed at once and the cage well disinfected. A few adults will survive but young stock seldom will recover. Of those that do survive, the females will bear young but the males will be sterile. Such stock, if retained, should be carefully segregated from the rest of the mousery.

"Animal World" for Kids

Something that's been needed for a long time has come to the front in the book by Edward G. Huey called "A Child's Story of the Animal World" (Reynal & Hitchcock, Inc., New York, \$3.50).

The animal kingdom has always been a puzzle to the child, and most adults do not know enough of child psychology to elucidate Mother Nature's work on the animal side of life. Mr. Huey's book simplifies the problem. It is interesting and answers questions simply and directly. Even the adult feels he has a fine groundwork in zoology after reading it!

The twelve parts cover the field completely. After explaining the difference between plants and animals, Mr. Huey talks of Arthropods (animals with jointed legs). Swiftly the story of mollusks, fish, reptiles, birds, mammals, unfolds. Over 350 pages with 65 photographs and numerous well-drawn illustrations help make the picture clearer.

The famous Calvert School of Baltimore tested every chapter for interest and readability—and found it fitted the needs of the child precisely.

A better understanding of pets and other animals is assured for your children by adding this work to your library. Your reviewer asked a successful teacher to read it, and she was extremely enthusiastic—so much so that her school, one of the largest in the state, will add it to its library.