

The Fancy Mouse

BY P. M. SODERBERG

The Black-Eyed White

In my earlier notes on mice and mouse breeding I only dealt with one of the well-known varieties, the P.E.W. (Pink-Eyed White).

Continuing from that point the next variety to consider is the B.E.W. (Black-Eyed White). There is, however, no close genetic relationship to warrant this selection from the point of view of genetics, for the two varieties have little in common. This choice is determined, however, from the fact that at shows when amalgamations have to take place these two varieties are usually put together, often to the detriment of the B.E.W.

The P.E.W. is an albino, but the B.E.W. is a marked mouse which in the first-class show specimen only shows color in the eye pigment, which appears black. It is, in fact, a mouse from which the markings have been bred out by selective breeding. For this reason most litters contain several specimens on which there is a splash of color in one or more spots. Such mice, if the markings are at all heavy, should be discarded. It is a very sound rule which says that a buck showing any color at all should never be used for breeding purposes. The colors shown on marked B.E.W.'s are invariably black or blue.

Some strains seem to carry in their make-up a lethal factor which, if inherited in duplicate, will cause the early death of the particular mouse. Theoretically this should be a characteristic of all strains, but it is in fact a theory which is not always borne out in practice.

In the early days of breeding the B.E.W. close inbreeding had to be adopted in an attempt to reduce the

possibility of heavily marked specimens and a preponderance of those showing a pure white coat. As a result the variety was lacking in size and also stamina. Those days are now past and the best B.E.W.'s sometimes approach the perfection of the P.E.W.

When one is starting a new strain, recourse has to be made to an outcross, and here the P.E.W. is likely to produce the best results. To achieve quick results it is essential to choose this outcross with a knowledge of its hidden color inheritance. P.E.W.'s carrying Black or Blue will obviously be much more helpful, particularly in the pink-eyed factor is not carried in duplicate.

Many breeders find the B.E.W. the most attractive of all varieties, for the breeding of a string of perfect specimens is not a matter of chance but demands real skill in choosing the breeders.

The Champagne

This is certainly my favorite variety, very probably because it was the one with which I achieved some of my earliest successes. Despite this personal preference, however, every mouse fancier is attracted by the perfection of color and form displayed by show specimens of this breed.

Champagne hardly gives the correct idea of color, for the actual mouse is a delicate shade of fawn, while in the outstanding specimen there is a distinct pinkish tone to the color. In one's breeding of the variety there will be many shades of color in the young, but it is always the palest specimens which win if the color is sound throughout. In the perfect Champagne there must be no

shading and the color must be level throughout. The body color should be carried under the belly, but even in the finest examples of the breed the fur underneath is usually several shades darker than that on the back and flanks.

Flakiness of color, an appearance of coat which from a distance seems to show a whitish undercoat, is a definite fault, and any mice showing this characteristic should be discarded. It is because mice of this washed-out appearance predominate when pale specimens are mated together that it is always wise to have one of the parents on the dark side. The young of pale parents usually lack sparkle and brightness. This variety usually possesses a very sleek, glossy coat when the mouse is in condition, and the longer guard hairs which are common in some varieties rarely appear in the Champagne.

In the past the P.E.W. has been used as an outcross, but in England in pre-war days there were so many different strains of excellent quality that so drastic an outcross was not necessary.

Two faults to which particular attention must be paid are light noses and feet. Once these faults have been bred into a strain they are extremely difficult to eradicate.

The Champagne mouse is a pink-eyed variety and genetically is a chocolate mouse carrying the pink-eyed factor in duplex. It is this fact which has reduced the body color to pale fawn.

The Pink-Eyed Fawn

This variety is now called Topaz, but the name by which it will most easily be recognized by American fanciers is the ancient one — Fawn. Perhaps fawn is not fully descriptive of its color, but it is certainly a mouse belonging to the yellow group.

This group provides a point of particular interest to the breeder. In the genetic make-up of the mice of this "yellow" family there is a lethal

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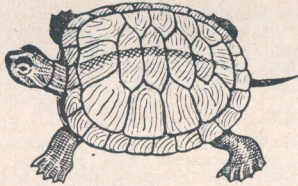
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The Fancy Mouse

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factor. If the young inherit one dose of this factor from either parent the young will live, but if it is inherited in duplex they die. With the B.E.W. the young which possess the lethal factor in duplicate usually die a few days after birth, but with the "yellow" group animals it is the embryo which dies early in its development. For this reason Fawns usually have less young per litter than other varieties in which the same factors do not operate.

Another difficulty with Fawns is the tendency to run to fat at an early age, with the result that the show career of a particular specimen is short. Careful selection of breeding stock will finally produce a strain in which excessive fatness can be avoided, but at all times care must be taken with diet, and overfeeding will have disastrous consequences. In all probability obesity and the lethal factor already mentioned are closely connected, but what the connection is could only be decided by careful scientific research.

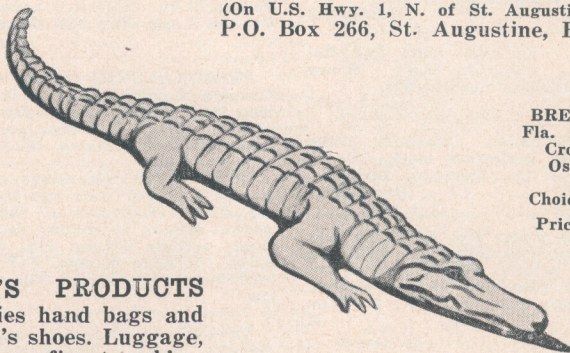
The rich, golden color of the fawn is most attractive, and if one can obtain solidity of color without darkness, then the picture is very pleasant. Generally speaking the Fawn is not outstanding for type and size, but an outcross with Champagnes of first quality will do much to improve this. From much matings it would be wise to discard all Champagnes in the resulting litters and to retain the best Fawns only.

Some strains of Fawn lack depth of color underneath on the belly, and Champagne-tans have been used in an attempt to improve this weakness. Unfortunately any improvements achieved in this way usually have equal disadvantages in other qualities, and considerable experience

(Continued on next page)

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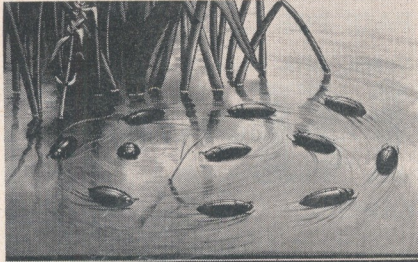
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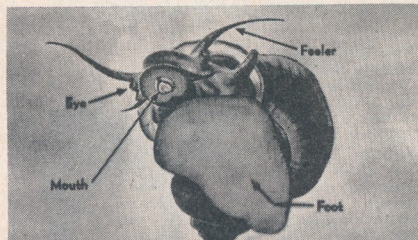
Slidefilms

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schools, these films also lend themselves to showings before interested groups in outdoor subjects, the fishing fraternity and other small group studies.



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The Pet Business

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partments" is strong indication that the citizens of that town would gladly support a first class pet shop if given the opportunity.

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is necessary to avoid the pitfalls.

The best advice one can give is that the beginner should start off with two or three trios of different strains and endeavor to improve his stock by crossing them between themselves. Selective breeding for particular qualities may be slow, but it is usually sure.

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Details on page four.

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