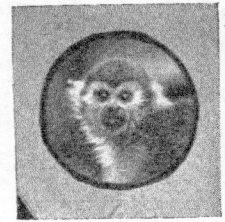


## ODD PETS



# Breeding Mice the Westminster Way

By D. E. NELSON

Before I received one of the recent issues of ALL-PETS MAGAZINE, I had several letters from my customers calling my attention to Mr. H. Dempsey's story of "Breeding Mice Outdoors," and requested me to tell them how I raise my mice.

Mr. Dempsey says, "In order to breed healthy and vigorous mice, use just good common sense which we all have."

If raising mice outdoors in apple boxes at five degrees below zero is good common sense, then all our hospitals, laboratories, and about 99% of the breeders and fanciers do not possess good common sense.

My mousery is not very large as several of my visitors will tell you. It is a small building at the rear of my home. It is 20 feet square, and I house about 3,000 mice at present.

I have an oil heater in it and try to keep it about 70 degrees all winter. I also have an 18 inch exhaust fan I use in the summer to keep the air circulating, thus avoiding as much odor and heat as possible.

My breeding units are of different sizes which I will explain a little latter.

### Feeding

The feeding program is simple if you use a little judgment. Mice will eat anything even poison. Rolled oats is a good milk producer for nursing mice, and most any grain is good. There is a very good mouse diet on the market that has everything that a mouse needs; I use both. I feed clean lettuce leaves about two or three times a week. If bread is used, it should be dry and not fresh unless you want to invite trouble. Some time ago we had a truck drivers strike here, and I was out of feed so I went to a bakery and got fifty loaves of bread

and fed my mice with it. This I did for three days, and I lost about five hundred mice. That taught me a lesson, but a small bit of bread along with their regular feed now and then doesn't seem to do any damage.

Mice should have feed at all times and never be allowed to get hungry. They should also have fresh water daily. Just let a mouse with from six to ten babies get hungry or thirsty and see what happens. I don't know of anything that will cause a mouse to turn cannibal quicker than hunger and thirst. For that reason if nothing else, don't starve your pets. Think of your mice the same as any other pets. Any pet or animal worth having is worth care. I use bottles and glass tubes for drinking, and never use a can or dish as they get too messy. I clean all my drinking bottles once a week.

### Breeding

There are several methods of breeding mice, but I have my own way and get very good results. On my white mice I use five females to one male. These mice are about sixty to seventy days old and are sexually matured and ready for breeding.

I put the male in the breeding unit and leave him alone for about a day. This gives him a chance to get used to his new home, and he will be the master. The following day I put in five females with him. If you put the male with the females, they may whip him and refuse to accept his services. They will always be the bullies. If your mice are in good condition, you can expect to have young in about twenty-five days if not sooner. The gestation period is twenty days. The average litter is from six to ten mice. I have some females that have as many as twelve per litter. These five females and one male will settle down

and be good father and mothers and very seldom fight. They will raise their keep.

After the young are about twenty-five days old it is time they were weaned. I separate the sexes and put from twenty-five to thirty-five mice in a developing unit which is about 36 inches long, 12 inches wide and 6 inches deep.

I check every unit daily for any sick or dead mice. The best I select for breeders; some I keep, and the rest I sell. I don't sell any mice as breeders that I wouldn't buy myself. The rest I sell to laboratories and the scrubs go to the zoo.

Earlier in this article I said my units were different sizes. I will try and give you a picture of my mousery. I use twelve units to a section, that is, twelve breeding units 8 inches x 20 inches x 7 inches with a developing pen 60 inches long, 15 inches wide and 12 inches high; this pen will hold about three hundred mice until ready to ship to laboratories. My breeding stock never gets in this pen. The breeding stock is kept in units 36 inches x 12 inches x 6 inches.

The only difference in units for white mice and colored mice is that I use two or three females to one male in smaller units. The reason for this is I don't raise as many colored mice as I do white mice. I have several of these sections and about one hundred that I have on racks stacked three high. I have no waste space.

Just one thing more I would like to ask Mr. Dempsey and that is, just what would happen if I sold him mice that were raised in a heated building and he put them in apple boxes outdoors at five below zero. They would die and then he would blame me, or if I bought mice from him and put them

in a heated building what would happen?

Now Mr. Dempsey, let us be fair with ourselves as well as our public. There are a number of people that raise mice for pets and for the market.

A good many people would buy mice for a hobby if they got a square deal and a little advice that would help them, but with that kind of information they won't even think about mice.

Any animal, regardless of what it is, dog, cat, rabbit or our friendly mouse surely deserves a good home, and if they are not worth their keep, then I say get rid of them. Don't torture the little animals, be human and think how you would like it cooped up in a box at five below zero, no light, no air, and fed only what could be eaten in the evening.

Think it over Mr. Dempsey, and remember those mice are earning money for you so give them the best. They will pay you good dividends in the end.

### Grounded Flier

Residents of a West Philadelphia neighborhood blinked their eyes and stared in amazement one day recently when a white "crane" suddenly appeared in the midst of a residential district. Employees of the Philadelphia Zoo, responding to a telephone call from Mrs. J. R. Wilson, 4703 Kingsessing Avenue, Philadelphia,

hastened to the scene. With little difficulty they netted the bird and discovered that it was an American egret very much off its course. Its plumage, legs, and bill were coated with oil which explains why it was unable to fly.

The American egret is not rare around Philadelphia at this season. The snow white bird frequently appears on suburban ponds, where it stands patiently waiting for a fish or frog to come along. Egrets nest in the South but every year the young ones get the wanderlust and they travel northward where they linger until the first frosts chase them back home again.

The oil on the bird probably came from one of the polluted streams of the Philadelphia region or perhaps from a mosquito control area. Many birds of many kinds are killed each year by getting smeared with the clinging, sticky fluid.

### Feed Outlook Seems Better

By OLIN O. EVANS

With record crops prophesied by experts this year and the easing of the demand from abroad, the feed situation looks better. It is our belief that fancy poultry and game fowl of all kinds will be in great demand for several years to come. Every effort, however, should be made to cull out undesirable stock, and the wasting of feed should be reduced to a minimum to help conserve and save on feed.

## Ponies Popular Pets at Illinois Rural School



(Photo by L. C. Swanson, Moline, Ill.)

The students of the Atchison rural school, located a few miles northwest of Galesburg, Ill., in Knox county, make good use of their pets which daily carry them to and from the schoolhouse.

Four of the youthful equestrians are astride ponies and one is riding a horse.

The ponies are staked out on the "campus" while their owners are in classes, and the animals do a good job of keeping the lawn in check.

The school is taught by Mrs. Lewis Watson of Monmouth, Ill.

## SWAPPER PAGE

(Continued from page 63)

TRADE GOOD STOCK GIANT HOMERS, white kings, 1 1/4" globe value, artificial roses, remedies, face powders, children's books and tops for?—Edward Patton, R. 3, Centralia, Ill. sept-6-12003

RED DACHSHUND PUPPIES TO trade for parrots, birds or what?—Edna Fosha, Box 753, Winfield, Kan. sept.-6-3001

NEW ZEALAND RED BUCK, 12 PR. roller pigeons, std. Chinchilla buck, New Zealand whites, Electric razor, taxidermy set, small emery wheel with motor and stand, electric heater with fan. Want bantams, champagne does, camera or ?—H. E. Bailey, 2025 B Ave., N.E. Cedar Rapids, Iowa. sept-6-3881

PEDIGREED DUTCH RABBITS FOR use bantams, poultry, waterfowls, goats, fancy pigeons or what have you?—Belait Bantam Yards, F. B. Wilke, Rte. 2, Beloit, Wis. sept-6-3001

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